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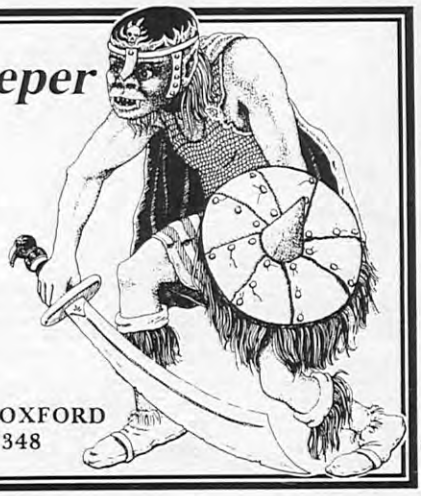

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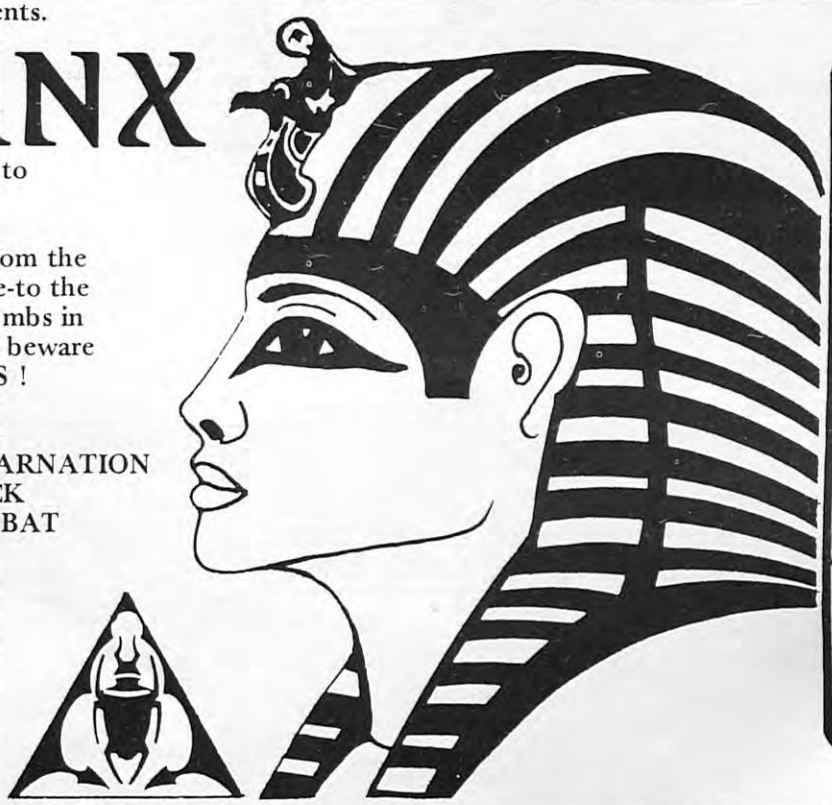

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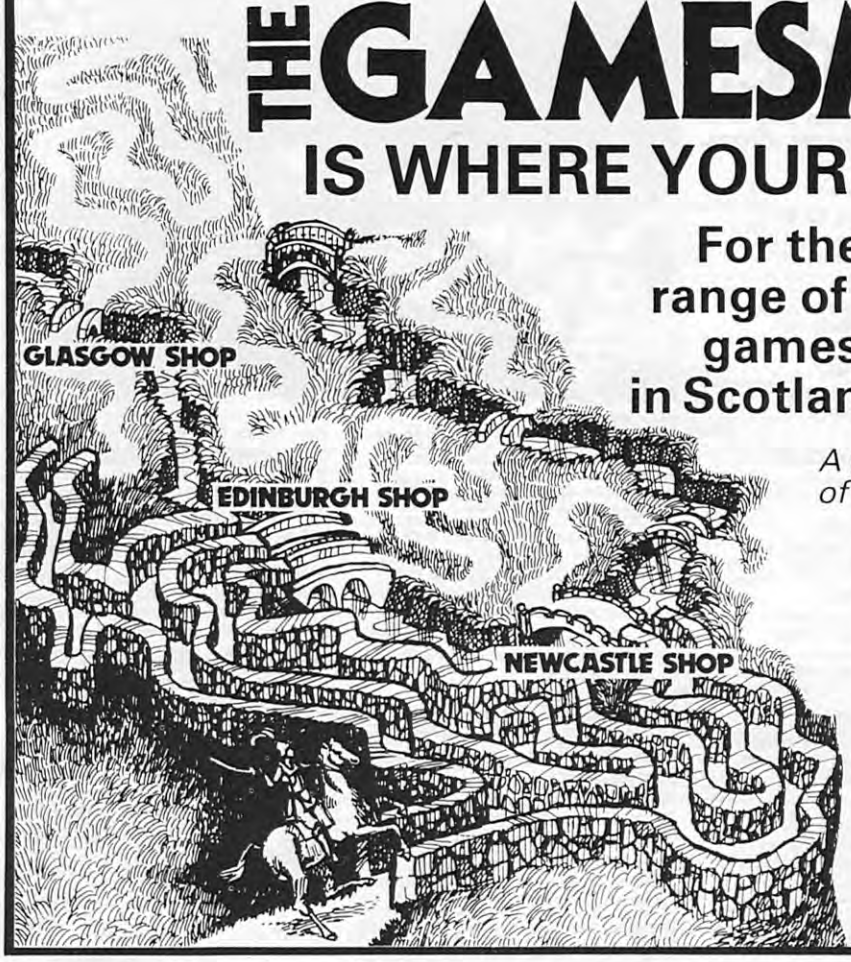

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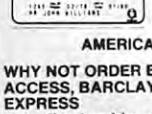

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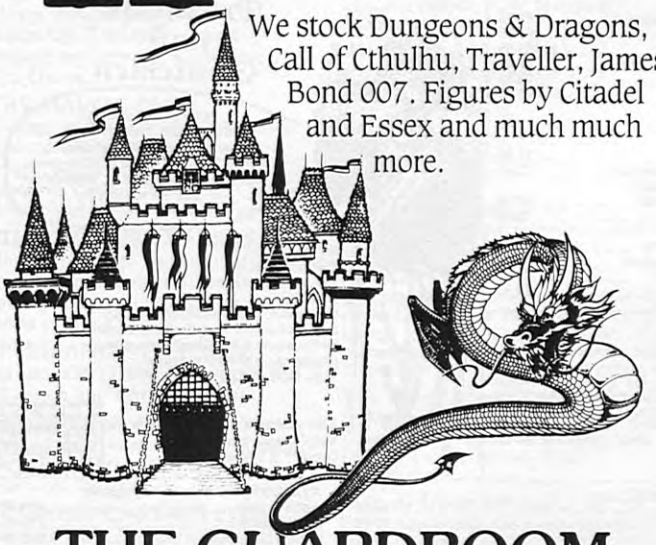

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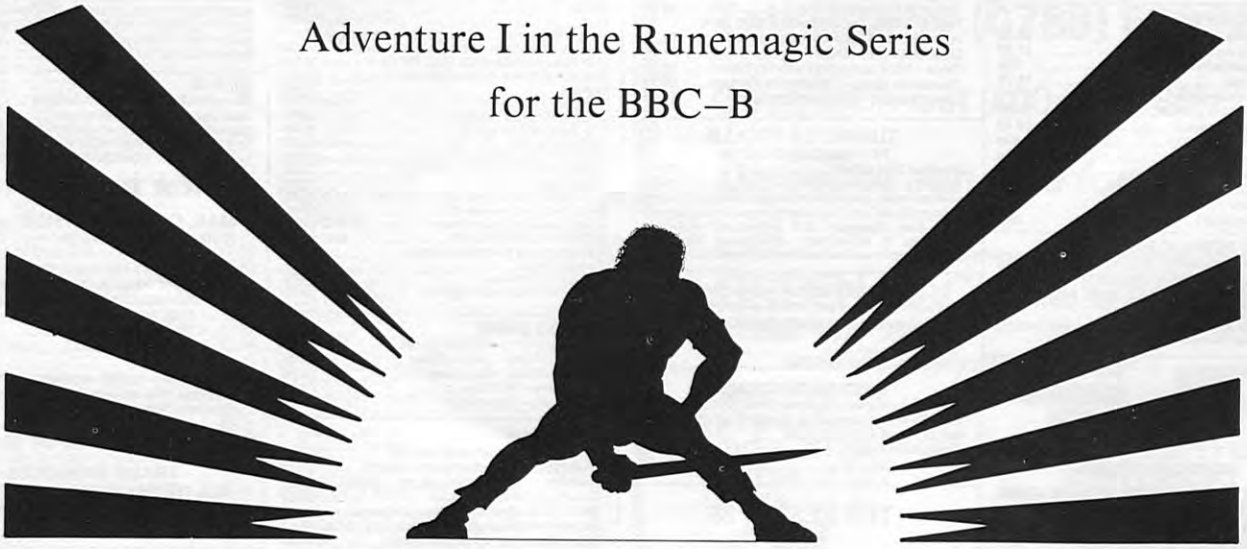

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Last issue I mentioned that *Games Workshop* are to release RPGs based on *Dr Who* and *Judge Dredd*. At the recent US games convention, Origins, I saw much evidence of licenced character RPGs as well; *Marvel Heroes, Star Trek, Indiana Jones, Ringworld* and *Middle Earth* to name but a few.
Do the games companies believe that players prefer to identify with established heroes rather than playing *themselves* in a role-playing game? If so, why is *D&D* still the most popular game? I'd be interested to read some of your views on this subject on the *Letters* page.

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mind over matter

Psionics in AD&D and Fantasy Role-Playing Games by Todd E Sundsted

Psionics in fantasy games seems to be rare. Problems occur with psionics right from the start. If a dungeon master decides to use psionics in his campaign, at least one player *has* to end up psionic or else the whole psionic system is forgotten as the campaign goes on. If none of the players are psionic – and according to the present *AD&D* rules, once it has been determined that you don't have psychic potential, you *never* will – the dungeon master isn't going to waste his/her time with NPCs and monsters who are psionic. Why bother? The psionic monster can't psychically attack non-psionic players who are immune to everything but the costly *Psionic Blast* (unless they are insane, in which case they are immune to everything), and the best part of psionics, the psionic-to-psionic combat, can't happen, unless the characters get their jollies watching two psionic NPCs fight.

If a character *is* psionic the situation is better and the DM will be able to include all those psionic beasties in his campaign. Now it is up to the player to find good uses (or bad as the case may be) for his powers. Keeping psionic characters busy so they don't spend their time showing off is a taxing job for the DM, because the average psionic is a lot stronger than a normal character who doesn't have psychic abilities and has almost unlimited possibilities for being troublesome. The dungeon master has to make his campaign more challenging for the psionic player without making it too hard for the other characters. An intellect devourer is nothing to a strong psychic (even at first level), but it can definitely be a problem for those characters who lack the ability. Also, if psionic characters aren't kept under tight control in the early portions of the game when they are much more powerful than other player characters of the same level, they can disrupt party balance or game balance. *Psionically Blasting* any monster that comes around, or floating down the pit that just opened at your party's feet and killed three of your companions because of your *Body Equilibrium* discipline *can* cause jealousy.

In a party of all Good aligned creatures, this shouldn't cause many problems, because the character should use his powers to the benefit of the party. However, if your whole player character group happens to be Neutral or Evil and one character is psionic, friction will probably result.

This would seem to indicate that the ultimate party would be one in which every character is psionic, and of roughly the same strength and overall ability. Consider, however, that the ratio of psionics to non-psionics is 1 to 20, or 5% of the population is psionic (and this figure is slightly large; in any campaign I have run, the occurrence rate is usually under 1% at the very best), the chances of every player character in a campaign being psionic is almost nil. It would be possible for the dungeon master to *allow* all player characters in a campaign to be psionic, with the justification that they all met because they were psionic and 'contacted' each other when they detected each other's presence in the general area, or that they banded together to throw down a powerful evil psionic threat, or something of this nature. I have put this reasoning to use in various singular adventures and mini-campaigns consisting of two or three interconnected adventures, and it works quite nicely, especially if all the characters have complementary abilities, but it probably wouldn't work for full size campaigns as it gives the player characters an unfair advantage over other NPCs and monsters.

Psionics in Campaigns

In those campaigns I have run that include psionic powers I have seldom had any problems keeping them from destroying game balance. However, psionic characters are special and have many special abilities; they must be watched by the DM. The use of psionics in a campaign can expand the campaign in hundreds of directions and create hundreds of new problems as well.

In order to make psychic powers as important as they should be, the dungeon master should keep the occurrences of such powers in humans and demi-humans at a minimum. A one percent rate of psionic occurrence in any campaign is very high. This makes psionic abilities all the more desired and respected, and a player character or non-player character who has the ability is considered to be a powerful figure in the frame of my campaigns. To make up for this raise in status, you can limit the powers of lower level psionics by giving them fewer disciplines (rather than one per level up to their maximum as stated in the *Players Handbook*), and slightly restructure the psionic combat tables so that lower level psionics won't be as proficient with them as they would normally be. Higher level psionics can have all the powers they would normally have, though. These changes also take care of the problem of the psionic player

character totally dominating play, as has sometimes occured.

In addition to these changes, I am currently testing a new idea I came up with for inclusion in my current campaign. I wondered what would happen if a group of psionics got together and decided to start a school to teach how to increase ability with psionics and how to apply them in new ways (ie learn new disciplines). It seems to me, that if a character really wanted to be psionic, he should be able to work at controlling his mind, and after a certain amount of time (perhaps years) become a true psionic. This parallels the stories of excursions to places like mystical Tibet to learn occult powers from a group of strange monks or the like. This school of psionics would be situated in an out of the way location and only a few select people would know of it or how to find it.

In addition to non-psionics possibly becoming psionic, the school also allows psionic characters to study and learn new disciplines or increase their psionic potential.

The costs for each of these 'classes' would probably be expensive, both in time and in money, but for the player who has always wanted his character to be psionic and never seemed to be able to roll that magical amount, going to the school would be well worth the time it would take away from his character's participation in the campaign.

Another necessary change is the limitation of the number of psionic monsters that roam the world. Most of the psionic monsters that are found in the *Monster Manual* are so powerful that a group of them could take out a whole city unless it was defended by an army of psionic humans. Mind flayers are 90% magic resistant and are far from push-overs in other ways. In addition to all their powers, they have psionic abilities and can use them on non-psionic creatures. These kind of problems crop up with the other monsters, too. Presumably, it was the designer's idea that the psychic monsters should be fought with psionics and not magic or swords; that is why most of them can't be hurt easily with magic and have multitudes of Hit Dice or take magic weapons to hit. The only problem with this logic is that if a group of characters come across one or two of these monsters and they don't have a powerful psionic in their group, they are going to be in trouble.

Helgor stared fixedly at the locked door on the other side of the room, his brow furrowed in concentration. Slowly, inch by inch the great iron key turned in the rusted lock, inexorably responding to the forces of his mind.

To make up for this, reduce the number of psychic monsters and get rid of some of the monsters altogether. In my campaign, I made mind flayers a solitary race with their roots far back in the past, in the time of the strange Elder Gods who created them. They reproduce much like the phoenix – when a mind flayer dies a natural death or is destroyed physically, its body decays and a new mind flayer is spawned out of the ichor that remains. Mind flayers who are killed by psionics, however, are destroyed forever, thus the population is slowly diminishing and mind flayers try not to indulge in psionic combat with other psionics.

Intellect devourers have been reduced to near extinction, with only a few of their number wandering the *Ethereal Plan* or other out of the way places. They don't reproduce very often, so their population is also slowly declining.

I did have problems making the extra-planar creatures fit into my campaign. I solved the problem by taking away some creatures' psionic ability or making them weak psionics with only a few points but immune to psionic attack. I left most of the deities with their powers but made them immune to psionic attack so that they wouldn't have to worry about a powerful mortal beating them psionically. Most deities don't use their psionic powers much anyway, as most of them have so much magic on hand.

Handling Troublesome Psionics

Sooner or later, a player will come along who decides that pushing the other players around with his powers is more fun than fighting monsters. In this case, something must be done before the rest of your players start to take matters into their own hands and lynch the bad player (or worse!).

A word or two to inform the player that his actions are causing dissension amidst the party should be enough to curb. further poor playing activities on the player's part. It is when the player wants to dominate the game that more permanent problems can result.

The first and best thing to do with a problem player is to sit him/her down and tell him/her to shape up or be shipped out. No campaign needs bad players. If the person in question refuses to start playing better (something I have a hard time imagining), then the dungeon master will have to take more stringent measures. In all cases the DM should avoid going on a vendetta against the bad character. This accomplishes nothing other than making the player mad at the DM and putting further strain on an already strained relationship.

Penalizing the character in experience points for his bad behaviour is a good way to control poor playing if the player is interested in having his character advance beyond fourth level. If the player's character runs around and constantly gets the party in trouble, an invisible stalker or a bounty hunter on his/her trail will also serve to get the idea across that the way he/she's acting isn't wanted.

Of course, the ultimate solution, short of kicking the player out of the campaign forever, is to take away his/her psychic powers, with no chance of getting them back – ever! Give the player clues that his powers are going by decreasing the player's strength or taking away disciplines permanently. Only a truly foolish player will continue to misuse his/her powers in face of this kind of prompting.

Psionics Today

Psychic abilities have been noted in the real world (our world) for many years, from the time of the Roman Empire (although such powers were considered to be magical in nature at the time) to the present. Recently (in the last ten years), much work has been done in the field of parapsychology (telekinesis, telepathy, precognition, teleportation, levitation, and clairvoyance) and quite a bit has been brought to light. Good theories as to why psychic abilities seem to work are few but progress is being made in understanding the powers of the mind.

Telekinesis is the moving of objects at a distance. The powers of poltergeists and ghosts have possibly been linked to latent psychics using their powers without realizing it. Telekinetic powers seem to be hardly affected by the distance over which they operate and the materials through which they must penetrate.

Telepathy and *ESP* (extra-sensory perception) is the detection of thoughts of other beings with or without their knowledge. Telepathy isn't a physical phenomena like telekinesis, but experiments with people in different rooms, one person reading the other's mind and reporting what he was thinking of or looking at, have shown results that cannot be attributed to mere coincidence.

Precognition is the ability to foresee the future, either in brief glimpses or in detail. This psychic phenomena is perhaps the least understood and credible of all the types as there is no easy way to prove what a psychic says is going to happen until it happens, and the ability often seems to come at random times when the psychic is nowhere near a laboratory setting where his visions can be tested. In addition to this, the number of people who *claim* to have the ability and don't numbers quite highly. This helps give precognition a bad name.

Psychic abilities have been noted in the real world for many years. Recently, much work has been done in the field of parapsychology and slow progress is being made in understanding the powers of the mind.

Levitation is nearly the same as telekinesis except the psychic moves a living body (usually his own) with his mind.

Clairvoyance is related to precognition except that it deals with the ability of a psychic to detect things that occured in a certain area some time in the past. This discipline is sometimes used by police and other law-enforcement agencies to use in prosecuting a criminal.

Teleportation is one of the pyschic abilities on which very little testing in the laboratory has been done. Teleportation involves making an object suddenly appear in a sealed container or room.

There are dozens of other types of psychic phenomena, such as astral travelling or immunity to fire (such as is shown by fire-walkers) or healing with the mind, to add to this list. Research is going on all the time to unravel the mystery of psychic abilities. Meanwhile more cases of psychic abilities are being found.□

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WIZARDS
Mayfair Games **£7.95 each**

There should be a certificate as in the film industry attached to some FRP products these days. And in the case of the first three Role-Aids named above it could be an X – X for execrable, excruciating and extortionate. The one thing that can be said for them is that the price should dissuade any self-respecting gamer from buying them. I fail to see why we need yet another set of pseudo-anthropological treatises on marriage customs amongst magical folk (Margaret Mead has a lot to answer for) not least when the said treatises are badly written, badly illustrated and badly proofread. Surely somebody at *Mayfair Games* is aware that a 'diety' (sic) is not a god? Style and presentation are bad enough, but the books are prime examples of the determinism so popular at present;

"The true nature of Trolls needs to be examined under the unbiased lens of knowledge and illuminated by the light of the lamp of truth."

Note the 'scientific' attitude to gaming, an attitude surely inconsistent with the fantasy element of role-playing. The approach which tells you that Dwarven sex-equality was established during the years 2690-2143BP only serves to demystify the mysterious and to humanise the

The very purpose of the books (to aid role-playing) is negated by the pseudo-scientific style, for prospective Dwarves must search a pudding of 'facts' to recover any useful material. Nor is the search made any easier by the use of illustrative anecdotes or interesting stories which incorporate information the authors wish to convey. And in the end, the information is of little worth save as general background to the scenarios which form the greater part of the books. These adventures are not specifically designed for elves, dwarves or dark folk, despite the apparent intention to change player attitudes to (for example) trolls. Indeed the dark folk hardly escape from their traditional role as opponents and amusements of adventurers. Poor misunderstood trolls remain poor, misunderstood and better dead.

Fortunately for my blood pressure, *Wizards* is a much better book. It suffers from the same appalling presentation (anybody who produces an Arthurian adventure and talks about the 'Seige Perlious' should be bastinadoed to death), but succeeds almost in spite of itself. I have not come across a more effective translation of literature into FRP, and I actually enjoyed reading some of the scenarios which, generally speaking, captured the atmosphere of the novels they drew from. The stories are well thought-out (especially *Gilgamesh*) have reasonable objectives and credible characterisations. I did take exception to the hybrid Dark Age and Chivalric background to the Arthurian adventure, for the justification of the action was inconsistent with the plot. Accepting this however, *The Pillar of Clinschor* plays well enough.

I retain mixed feelings about *Wizards* on the grounds that though there is material in the book for several evenings play, there will be problems integrating the differing scenarios into any long-term campaign (unless of course they have the same setting), and the book therefore lacks unity *Wizards* succeeds on its own terms, to some extent, despite the presentation, but it is of limited value otherwise. *Elves, Dwarves* and *Dark Folk* are merely amateur rehashes of widely current material lacking the redeeming features of a coherent setting or adequate presentation. Methinks I smell a fast buck!

	Elves, Dwarves, Dark Folk	Wizards
Presentation:	5	6
Content:	3	6
Overall:	3	6

Robert Dale

THE TRAVELLER ADVENTURE
Game Designers' Workshop **£9.95**

This is the companion to the *Traveller Book*. It is a *Traveller* campaign set in the Aramis subsector of the Spinward Marches and can be used with any set of *Traveller* rules.

The basic plot as it appears to the adventurers: The band are the crew of a subsidised merchant, the *March Harrier*, assigned to a route in the Aramis subsector. While taking a brief vacation on Leedor as their ship is overhauled, a starship crashes, apparently because of crew negligence. Another ship hastily leaves port when a message is delivered by the band. Then while touring a museum, the group meet a Vargr being assaulted by thugs; since he is a player character, they likely help him out. The Vargr has been robbed of a mysterious brooch which he goes to extraordinary lengths to recover. It becomes apparent that nefarious forces want this brooch returned for no obvious reason, and that the Vargr's claim to it is not entirely legal.

Leaving Leedor with the Vargr, the band are then taken through a carefully plotted series of adventures on world after world in the subsector, gathering clues as to what is going on along the way, making NPC friends and enemies of various kinds, and trading. Eventually all is revealed and a dramatic confrontation settles the villain's hash once and for all – or does it?

The campaign proper has almost a dozen set-piece scenarios, to be encountered in a specific sequence; these are interspersed with shorter commissions of the type found in *76 Patrons*, intended as red herrings and spacers. Even these are as detailed as full blown adventures. These shorter scenarios could be omitted, in which case a dedicated group playing nightly could get through the whole package in a week or two; or left in together, perhaps with some adventures of the referee's choosing, in which case a typical group could take up to a year (real time) to get to the end – the latter course is strongly recommended.

Marc Miller's alter ego, Marc hault-Oberlindes, appears frequently as a powerful friend the adventurers make early on. Equally powerful but less obvious friends and enemies are also present.

Each of 26 worlds are described; 9 in some detail, the rest by thumbnail

sketches. Each transport company and other major organisation resident in the subsector is briefly explained. Well-written introductory sections and special rules give the GM a thorough grasp of what is going on. There is an essay on the historical background of the Spinward Marches subsector. Finally, and perhaps best of all, there is what must be the definitive description of Vargr – an 8-page section detailing society, attitudes, character generation and so on.

In conclusion, this is a superb campaign capable of entertaining a group of up to 8 players of any experience for up to a year. The GM should be fairly experienced to get the best from it, as it is quite complex and lengthy and there are several separate and detailed main plots and numerous subplots to keep track of. Its main disadvantage is that playing it will lock the GM's campaign fairly solidly into the Spinward Marches for good. On the plus side, that very same detail makes it a very good adventure, and there are seeds for many later scenarios in the background which will allow a long-term campaign to be set up in the subsector with very little work on the GM's part.

Presentation:	**8**	**Enjoyment:**	**10**
Playability:	**8**	**Complexity:**	**7**
Skill:	**6**	**Rules:**	**6**
Overall:	**9**		**Andy Slack**

POWERS AND PERILS
Avalon Hill **£19.95**

Pee-Pee, as it is becoming known, is one of *Avalon Hill's* many new entries into role-playing. All the five volumes are clearly printed and laid out in an easy-to-follow manner.

The first volume covers character creation using dice to give ten primary characteristics and then adding or subtracting various modifiers depending on your race and sex; the races being humans, elves, faeries and dwarves. Social station and age are generated next, and used to work out how experienced the character is. Then the character's initial skills are worked out using a point allocation system (applied to both combat and general skills). Skills can be improved by training or by using points gained from successful use of skills, but they all have a maximum expertise level which depends on your primary characteristics. Generating a character can prove to be a very lengthy business, and the large number of abbreviations can cause some confusion. Additionally, some of the instructions are rather ambiguous.

Volume two is divided into two sections, combat and magic. Combat is similar to *RuneQuest*, and uses the 12-second tactical turn. Skill rolls are additionally used to determine the damage done, and armour and shields absorb damage in the standard fashion.

Magic and magicians are also covered here, there being three types of magicians – Wizards, Shamans and Sidhe (Faeries, elves and Alfar). The wizards seek knowledge or power and are divided into three orientations: law, balance and chaos. Shamans are tied to the forces of nature, and the Sidhe are aligned with the forces of creation and the Elder Gods. Spells are cast using a *Mana* point system, the cost and success of the spell being determined by the skill of the caster. Spell descriptions are adequate, and a large selection is available.

The third volume contains a basic description of the three planes of existence, descriptions of the creatures who inhabit these planes, and a very good general encounter system. The list of creatures is very comprehensive and contains the usual legendary creatures as well as a fair number of new monsters. Physical, magical and psychological attributes of creatures, their alignment and general reaction on being encountered are listed in a clear manner.

Volume 4 deals with the potential human encounters and the different cultures of a world. The tables and listings of encounters cover a wide range, from cities through to uncivilised lands, and goes to great lengths to give a rationale for the encounter. This book also covers magical and non-magical treasures.

The fifth and final volume details the county of Donara. This includes a description of the main NPCs, the events and the general background of the county. Also included is a useful basic scenario designed to introduce the players to the game.

Overall, *P&P* introduces some nice ideas which can be adapted readily into other systems. The game is more suited to experienced players and GMs since it is fairly complex. In general, a greater amount of work than is normal for an RPG is needed for playing *Powers and Perils*, but it is a good system.

Presentation:	**9**	**Complexity:**	**9**
Playability:	**8**	**Rules:**	**7**
Overall:	**8**		**Adrian Knowles**

JAMES BOND 007 **£7.95 (rules only)**
Victory Games **£11.95 (boxed set)**

It is a refreshing change to find almost all that is required in a games system contained in just one book. The *007* system includes an incredible amount of background information within the rules system itself. The rules are clearly presented and in a logical progression and, on the whole, explained adequately. Most important in a games system that will undoubtedly sell to the Bond fans is the thorough introduction which takes the neophyte agent through the concepts behind the game, giving them an idea as to the system used and, most importantly, a long and interesting example of spy gaming in play, combining film imagery with play mechanics.

Skills, including combat, work on a quality of result system rather than just a plain success, the results ranging from 'acceptable' to 'excellent'. The idea is a neat one, although the execution can get messy, being dependent on a number of key tables which are not printed anywhere else in the book apart from their relevant part in the text. A wide range of useful skills are explained which, coupled with the 'fields of experience' of an agent give the characters a very broad background – not all of it apparently useful for straightforward spy work. Spies have three ranks assigned to them in the game (Rookie, Agent and 00 ranks) which determine the number of points available to design characters. The points system is weighted against especially high values which works very nicely, encouraging the development of typical spies rather than superheroes. It is still possible to design wrecking machines, but they'll usually be very weak in other areas, making them obsolete as far as spy work is concerned. The system, both in creating a character and running the game is very maths orientated, showing the one flaw in an otherwise neat and clever games system.

Combat abandons hit points, adopting wound levels for simplicity and game feel. The distinction between similar weapons is minimal, each having particular foibles which endear themselves to the user, but the overall range of damage that can be dished out is extreme! The section on weapons is limited in its coverage, but the amount of information given is more valuable compared to a system which covers plenty of weaponry with no information or even drawings of equipment. The amount of illustrations in the equipment section helps to generate a feel for the game, with individual items being easily identified when in use either by the players or their opponents.

Although the Bond movies are rather gadget orientated, the basic rules contain very few interesting items except for much of the standard agent fare (flashy watches, pens and the like) and the game itself cannot be claimed to be much more than a standard spy game with the advantage of having the Bond name attached to it. The Bond flavour is mainly developed by a horribly false Britain feel (it is written by Americans, after all) coupled with an extensive detailing of Bond's allies and enemies from the films.

The handling of the enemies will come as a disappointment if you're expecting Spectre to be detailed, with all villains being members of an organisation called TAROT (despite the fact that some of them would never be connected since they were individual operators). Rivalling TAROT there is MI6, players being members of this latter organisation, with the appropriate section on MI6, 'M', 'Q' and Miss Moneypenny.

The rulebook is finished off with scanty details of some major cities of the world, followed by an introductory solo on the island of Dr No.

As a complete system, the *007* game stands up quite well, with a real feeling of belonging to part of the Bond mythos being generated in play. There are faults, however, resulting from complexity of mechanics which can hinder play if adhered to. The rules also concentrate on the more modern pieces of equipment to the detriment of earlier Bond movies (which relied more on plot and action rather than gadgets) and a number of essential areas remain untouched or insufficiently developed. The game might not be the best spy role-game available, but it is more complete and playable than any of its rivals.

Presentation:	**5**	**Enjoyment:**	**9**
Playability:	**7**	**Complexity:**	**8**
Value (boxed set):	**3**	**Rules:**	**8**
(rules only):	**7**	**Overall:**	**6**
			Bob Neville

Critical Mass is a monthly science fiction and fantasy book review column, written by Dave Langford.

THE HARD LINE

Apologies this month to all denizens of fantasy, to dragons, elves, hobbits, tebbits, nameless tentacular abominations frothing in primal slime from Kadath in the Cold Waste, and Lew Pulsipher. Fantasy books receive short shrift this time because, maddened perhaps by sunspots, the ever-loving publishers have neglected to send any. Instead it's spaceships, computers and hard SF all the way. (40,000 fantasy gamers fling down the magazine with vile oaths.) Four of the batch have vaguely common themes of interstellar conflict, cosmic events and such – plus sidelights on presenting background data (about which GMs always worry) and on ethics and morality (about which players rarely worry enough).

First comes Frederik Pohl's *Heechee Rendezvous* [*Gollancz* 311pp £8.95], sequel to *Gateway* (excellent) and *Beyond the Blue Event Horizon*. Pohl really does think big, as with his devilish alien 'Assassins' who've reversed the expansion of our universe and are waiting (in a black hole, where else?) for its collapse and a new Big Bang in which they plan to have a say. I rather balk at black holes being mere convenient suspended-animation chambers... The benevolent Heechee, whose mysterious artifacts triggered the previous books' plots, come onstage at last, while the familiar not-quite-hero Rohin Broadway finally gets apotheosed. What convinces is the way all life's tiresomeness carries on in the face of miracles: Heechee technology is the key to spaceflight *but* is also handy for terrorists. And the complex narrative is ingeniously presented as a computerized documentary, with inset information boxes and some showy to-and-fro scene-shifting by the omniscient 'narrator'. The ending's less than perfect, with some problems ignored rather than confronted, but *Heechee Rendezvous* completes a worthy trilogy.

Lord Dorsai by Gordan R Dickson [*Sphere* 152pp £1.95] got its Hugo – not Nebula as on the cover – in the short 'novella' category, and is padded out here with two shorts. Why are these not mentioned in the blurb? Because, dear readers, market surveys show you're 30-50% less eager to buy a short-story collection than a seeming novel... The 100-page title story is a fine addition to the Dorsai series, skilfully setting up a preposterous situation (five people versus an army!) and making it almost reasonable by sketching in the motives of honour, obligation and machismo leading up to it. Background problems: those who've not read earlier Dorsai tales will be confused by portentous early references to them, while those who do know the books will spot the chronology (pre-Soldier, Ask Not) and deduce which characters must survive. From the surprisingly satisfying resolution, which turns the enemies' machismo judo-style against them, I suspect Dickson has been reading Kipling again.

What James P Hogan has been reading is Eric Frank Russell. Hogan's *Voyage from Yesteryear* [*Penguin* 377pp £2.50] is Russell's 'And Then There Were None' [see *The Great Explosion*] writ large, minus the wisecracks but with much physics thrown in. A heavy militarized Earth space-ark arrives to assume control of the Chiron colony out Centaurus way, only to find no government, no visible military force, no medium of exchange, no handle for Terran politicians at all. Russell's pompous Earthlings, like the British Empire confronted with Gandhi, were insufficiently ruthless to cope with passive resistance; Hogan's are very much nastier, and here the rather plodding story picks up interest. Background is presented in stodgy lectures; most readers will skip the one on physics occupying most of chapter 24. Solid and quite worthy stuff, but practically devoid of characterization.

Last of the four: E E 'Doc' Smith rises from the grave with *Subspace Encounter* [*Granada* 239pp £1.50] – a genuine unpublished Smith novel rather than the pathetic imitations by people called Stephen Goldin. This is a sequel to *Subspace Explorers*, which mercifully I have not read, and features lots of zappy action, grotty slang ('In sync to the skillionth of a whillionth of a nanosecond!'), superpowered folk who whiz round several universes psionically nobbling evildoers, and tin-eared overwriting. 'Stark' and 'starkly' remain favourite words, as in 'the theretofore starkly unknowable environment of a zeta field.' OK, one doesn't read Smith for literary graces, but this one is far inferior to the equally awfully written Lensman books because our hyperbrained Earthlings have it all too easy. Kim Kinnison used to suffer for his victories (eg erethism, amputation, infection with hideous alien fungi): this lot get theirs on a plate.

I promised to pass remarks on morality, but am hiding them down here since *Games Workshop* don't approve of these things. Smith's ethics are heartily Neanderthal as ever: there are baddies who are evil, so decent folk just have to wipe out the whole goddam race. Page 140: 'Genocide is supposed to be reprehensible. But...' Hogan is disturbing in the opposite sense: his Chironians have a near-perfect society and ethos thanks to their nice, rich upbringing – it's hard to swallow this bland dismissal of what I'd call chronic human perversity and a theologian would call Original Sin. Dickson breaks new ground, for him, with the plight of a trained Dorsai warrior who's psychologically unable to kill – it's quite a study in plot construction, the way that in spite of this our lad becomes a brave martyr, preserves total honour and machismo, saves the world, etc. (Dickson's solutions are notorious for working only in the author's carefully devised setting.) Lastly, Pohl gets frightfully American – or even Californian – with characters forever being analysed by others or themselves to trace the root cause of each mental quirk. Even the unspeakable and unknowable Assassins, the book's ending implies, will be good buddies once we've learnt to Understand them.

All right, GMs, what moral bias goes into your scenarios? If you think there isn't one, it's probably just that you haven't recognized it.

Less heavy, yet serious beneath a hysterically funny surface, is John Sladek's 18-story collection *The Lunatics of Terra* [*Gollancz* 192pp £7.95]. In Sladek's world-view it's only logical that a visiting alien is soon eclipsed as a TV attraction by a far more interesting mass murderer, or that cyborgization should be neither nightmarish nor utopian but just a status symbol. ('Except for her foot and her fingerprints, all of her visible parts had been replaced with improvements made of metal, high-quality plastics and mahogany.') He's especially good on pseudoscience, getting right inside that viewpoint in the tragicomic 'An Explanation for the Disappearance of the Moon'. Topnotch stuff.

New discovery of the month: Hilbert Schenck's *A Rose of Armageddon* [*Sphere* 190pp £1.75], first novel by the latest writer to have grasped that a weird name is the key to SF success. In his convincing and intellectually exciting narrative, a computerised soft science called 'morphology' is tested on the microcosm of a long-inhabited little island, and goes on to predict the end of the world. But there is an anomaly; the island holds the key to something special; history is not purposeless; and the mystical turn of the final 24 pages is a surprise and delight after Schenck's underplayed but escalating evocations of doom. I don't believe a word of it after p166, but recommend it just the same.

At the bottom of the heap: another reprint of the late great Philip K Dick's *Time Out of Joint* [*Penguin* 187pp £1.95], which develops along marvellously paranoid lines as the protagonist Ragle Gumm – name misspelt as always by *Penguin* in the blurb – learns his world is a fake set up to fool him alone. Later explanations are less satisfying, but there are classic moments, as when reality blows a fuse and a soft-drink stand disintegrates before Gumm's eyes, leaving only a bit of paper with the words SOFT-DRINK STAND. Just as I am now fading from view, leaving only a bit of paper saying *That's enough reviews –Ed.*□

A Traveller Scenario for 3-6 Player Characters. The Referee will need Books 1-5 (or the Starter Edition plus Books 4 and 5).

SKY RIG

by Paul Ormston

BACKGROUND

The players have, for some reason or other, found themselves on New World One (B063769-C), a man made space colony orbiting the system's only planet, a solitary gas giant called Skiddir. The colony itself is housed in a huge cylinder (48 miles long, 6 miles in diameter) which revolves along its axis to provide artificial gravity. Conditions inside are perfect for all kinds of human activity but recently this apparent paradise has undergone a revolution and then, a counter-revolution. The present governors now feel that they cannot trust most of New World's inhabitants, so they have approached an 'off-world' party whose loyalty they can buy.

PLAYER'S INFORMATION

The party is approached by Gyron Chard (UPP 56898A), a representative of New World's government, who offers the players a mission. If the party are interested in what he has to say they will be led to a private room where they will be given details of their mission:

Within the clouds of Skiddir are several airborne gas refineries or sky-rigs as the locals call them, vital to the colony. The rigs provide fuel for all the colony's power plants, as well as for refuelling visiting starships. Contact with a small experimental rig has been lost, and it is proposed that the party be sent to investigate.

The rig was working normally until five days ago, when the first outbreak of an unknown disease was reported by the rig's surgeon. Since then many of the crew have died. Then, 21 hours ago, audio contact was lost, and just 3 hours ago the rig's powerful location/navigation beacon failed. The government, fearing another uprising, dare not announce this to the general public until it is sure of what has happened to the rig.

If the party accept this mission they will have but one hour to collect any personal equipment and arrive at the starport. This speed is necessary due to the worsening weather conditions on the planet below. Gyron tells them that a 30 ton cutter is waiting for them at the starport.

Cutter Profile (High Guard)

SY-0105501-20000-00000-0		MCr19	TL9	30 tons
Crew = 2	Passengers = 8	Cargo = 6	Fuel = 2	Agility = 5

Data on the Gas Giant Skiddir

Skiddir has a diameter of 151,270km (94,000 miles). The atmosphere is made up mainly of Hydrogen and Helium, but also contains higher than usual amounts of other rare gases. All altitude readings are taken from the exact centre point of the planet. Using this, the top of the atmosphere has an altitude of 75,635km (47,000 miles); the cloud tops start at 69,200km (43,000 miles), and the sky-rig the players are heading for floats at a height of 51,500km (32,000 miles). The average wind speed at this altitude is 560km (350mph), rising to 1050 (650mph) during storm conditions. Skiddir's gravity at this height is 3g, and its atmospheric pressure is five times greater than Earth's. Skiddir also emits a huge amount of radio noise, making normal communication links useless. To combat this, all ships that enter Skiddir's atmosphere are fitted with large arrays of communications/avionic equipment, but even these cannot pierce the extra interference caused by a storm.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

The referee should give the players a copy of the rig's deck plans. Gyron Chard will have informed the characters about all the relevant security procedures, so they can gain access to any part of the rig. The players should also know the data about Skiddir, as well as the fact that a storm is heading rapidly towards the Sky-Rig.

The Journey to the Sky-Rig

The New World colony orbits Skiddir at an altitude of 2,059,960km (1,280,000 miles). It will take 8½ hours to reach the last known position of the Sky-Rig. During the flight roll twice for encounters on 2d6, 9+ an encounter has occured . Roll 1d6.

Encounter Table

Die Roll	*Encounter*
1	Turbulence. Pilot must roll 8+, DMs, +1 pilot skill to remain in control of cutter; if the roll is failed then the ship is out of control, roll again each round until control is regained. For each round out of control roll 2d6, if a 12 is rolled some piece of the player's equipment has been broken.
2	Lightning Strike. The cutter is undamaged, but one character takes 1d6+1 Damage.
3	Confused Avionics. Static build up on the outer hull confuses navigation instruments. Roll 8+, DMs, +1 navigation skill to remain on course. If the roll is failed add 1d6+1 minutes to flight time.
4	Radar Contact. The players see a blip on the cutter's radar that looks like another ship following them. It is in fact a false radar image, there is nothing there.
5	Personal Equipment Failure. Unknown to the players one piece of their equipment fails, due to old age, lack of maintenance etc
6	Revolutionary Spy. A spy has hidden onboard the cutter, if the players say they are searching for the cutter he will be found, otherwise he will remain hidden. If he is found he will not tell the players his true identity, but he will always try to prevent the players from succeeding with their mission. UPP 678A66, he carries a snub pistol. This can only happen once, if it is rolled again count the second roll as no encounter.

Once the players have reached the rig's last known position, they will find that it has drifted off station, 32km (20 miles) 'downwind' and 4.5km (2.7 miles) lower than it should be.

Once aboard the players will have access to three other sources of information, the rig's main computer, the Captain's Log and the Surgeon's Log. Information can be gained from the rig's computer at any terminal throughout the rig but it only contains a great deal of very technical data which would take days to analyse. The two logs can only be found in the Captain's cabin and in the Sick Bay; the players should know of the Logs but not where they are kept. The Encounter Table and the Systems Failure Table give the events relating to the adventure. The referee should add other events to confuse and mislead the players. These can be about falling production figures, minor accidents or anything else the referee likes. The Surgeon's Log also contains a full description of the symptoms of the disease at the end.

Encounters

The Energy Sucker. Deep within Skiddir's atmosphere live a multitude of strange unknown animals, of which the Energy Sucker is one. This particular individual lived off the occasional lightning strike, but entirely by chance, found its way into the upper reaches of the atmosphere, where it found an incredibly rich source of food, the Sky-Rig. As this creature approached it was sucked into one of the rig's gas intakes, causing all kinds of malfunctions in the rig's refinery which led to it being injected into an empty fuel tank where it lodged and started to feed.

The Energy Sucker lives off electrical energy, which it absorbs through a vast number of tentacles. This creature has caused all the deaths on the rig, and the players must find and kill it to save the Sky-Rig. It consists of three main parts. A large energy storage sac, a small body containing the brain and other organs and a vast mass of thin but extremely long feeding tentacles. These tentacles allows the passage of electricity along their length, but not through their sides, so all energy is absorbed at the very end of the tentacle.

Energy Sucker	*Size*	*Armour*	*Hits*	*Wounds & Weapons*
Energy Sac	25m Diameter	Cloth & Reflec	12/-	none
Body	3m Diameter	Cloth	2/29	none
Tentacles	150m Long	Cloth & Reflec	2/2	Electrical Discharge

For game purposes the number of tentacles is unlimited. The Energy Sucker can create an electrical discharge, a small lightning bolt projected from the end of a tentacle. Each tentacle can fire one lightning bolt each round; the bolt attacking as a laser rifle but only doing 1d6+1 damage. Reflec has no effect on this attack. It can also 'attack' via a by-product of the way the creature feeds. The human body is controlled by tiny electrical impulses in the central nervous system. These impulses are vulnerable to being absorbed by this creature. This draining effect manifests itself as a form of disease. The symptoms of this disease are:

A feeling of tiredness, lasting for Endurance x 1 minutes, after which ▷

▷the patient falls into a deep sleep, lasting for Endurance x 1 minutes. The victim then goes into a coma which lasts for Endurance x 1d6 minutes, after which the victim dies.

Medical Slow drug will increase the survival time to three times that of normal (the players should not know this). The creature's tentacles do not have to touch their target, they absorb energy from everything within 3 metres of them.

Finding and Killing the Energy Sucker. The creature's tentacles have burnt their way through bulkheads following electric cables in between the decks. Opening *any* inspection panel will reveal great bundles of tentacles. There are no parts of this creature in plain sight.

There are three main ways of killing the Energy Sucker. Shooting the Energy Sac, shooting the body or giving the creature so much power so quickly that the shock kills it. Shooting the body is quite a safe method but the body is a small target compared with the Energy Sac, which sprouts directly from it. Shooting the Energy Sac is very dangerous, as once it has taken 12 points of damage, all the energy stored in it will be released in one huge explosion. This explosion will do 1000 points of damage and have a blast radius of 15 metres. Being behind hard cover will reduce the damage by half, and if the blast fails to penetrate, the damage will be halved again. Treat the blast as a PGMP-12 for 'to hit' purposes. If a character is in an area completely sealed off by bulkheads from the explosion he will take no damage. There is also a one in six chance that the outer pressure hull will split. If it does split an instant increase in pressure will occur; throw under Endurance to remain conscious. This will be accompanied by a sudden increase in wind speed; unless the character is tied down or can duck through an air tight door they will be literally blown out of the rig. The last method is to make an incision in the Energy Sac (2 points of damage will make a suitable hole) insert a steel cable and touch the other end to the side of the body or a group of tentacles. All its energy will be instantly released and the creature will be unable to cope with this massive influx of power and will die.

Spikeys. These animals come from the same region as the Energy Sucker, but are small and are not so dangerous!

Animal Type	*Weight*	*Hits*	*Armour*	*Wounds*	
12 Flying Parasite	6kg	8/8	Jack	2d6	A6 F9 S2

These animals are 60-70cm across resembling huge snow flakes because of their crystalline structure. They attack by flying into their victims, the ends of their spines impaling the target. The rig's atmosphere acts as a slow poison on these animals and so they may die before the players encounter them.

Worker Robot. These machines are 2.5 metres long and very strong. They are designed to work on the outside of the rig in all but the worst weather conditions. Only one robot is still functional when the players arrive onboard. The robot has two work arms, and a central welding laser. It flys on null-gravity modules, but at the present time it can only fly as fast as a man can walk. The robot was originally controlled via a radio link, but this has been rendered useless by the Energy Sucker. Its internal controls are malfunctioning and it will attack anything it can see moving. As weapons the workarms count as Blade +1 and the laser as Laser Rifle +1, its skin counts as Cloth -1. It has 35 hit points.

The Scientist, Daniels. The last surviving member of the rig's crew, Daniels has been affected by the disease and looks in a very bad way. When the players reach him he will weakly say "it's... it's a..." and will then fall unconscious.

System Failure

This table reflects the feeding of the Energy Sucker on the power sources within the rig. As a guide for other pieces of equipment not on the list, large energy sources will fail before smaller ones and sensitive equipment will fail before the more robust. Most equipment will not be damaged, just all the electrical power that was in it will be 'gone'.

System Failure Table

Time (mins)	*Effect*
5	Docking bay door power fails, the player's cutter is locked in.
7	Storm hits, all communication is lost with the outside world.
10	Air locks fail. Players cannot open the outer air lock doors, except by blowing the emergency explosive bolts.
20 END	Main lighting circuit fails, replaced by red emergency lights, cutter's power output reduced by half.
30	Characters feel heavy, due to partial failure of deck grav plates. Internal gravity now 1.5g. Battle Dress fails.
35	PGMP weapons fail.
40	Vacc suits fail.
45	Main bridge controls fail, laser rifles and short range communicators are drained.
55 END	Main computer fails, laser carbines drained.
65	Hand computers fail, the rig's cooling system stops, slowly increase the internal temperature.
70	Spikeys die, Worker Robot's power fails (see encounter section).
75	Laser pistols, and any other energy weapons are drained. All life rafts but one fail.
85	Emergency lighting fails. Internal gravity rises to 2g. Air recycling stops.
95 END	All remaining electronic equipment carried by the players fails.
105	Power to Iris valves, and lifts fail. Total power failure on the cutter.
110	Grav plates fail, internal gravity now 3g.
115	Last Life Raft fails.
120	Complete power failure, the rig's drives fail. The rig falls from the sky. Anyone left onboard at this time dies.

Time = Time after the party arrive onboard in game minutes.
END = Endurance saving throw. Throw under Endurance on 2d6, DMs; First save -2, second save -1, third save no DM. If the character fails a save they have 'caught' the disease.

The failure of the life support systems cooling and air recycling has no real game effect but it can add a great deal of 'atmosphere'.

Captain Straker's Log

3rd. Science Officer Daniels has noticed some odd-looking crystalline like creatures through the Observation Blister.

*4th. Several of these creatures (*Spikeys *as Daniels has named them) attacked some crew members on C deck. Security managed to capture and confine them in the Caging area under my orders. Martens is studying them now. I have Garron, the Chief Engineer, looking into how they got aboard.*

5th. Garron reports a major malfunction in the Gas Intakes. This must be where the Spikeys came on board – hence the damage. However, the Engineering Section were able to repair it within five hours. (Referee: this was the Energy Sucker making an entrance).

6th. Garron reports some minor power failures, nothing to worry about, he says.

7th. Surgeon Martens tells me a crew member has died today – from some unknown disease. I have given him all the necessary facilities to examine the Spikeys in depth. It seems likely they are the cause. I have ordered the quarantine of the Sky Rig. New World must not be exposed to the disease. Also puzzling are the continued reports of minor power failures. Afternoon – Martens reports that the Spikey's are slowly dying.

8th. This morning, Garron recommended the closing down of the refinery because of increased unexplained malfunctions, endangering the safety of the crew. The Production Manager objected but I was forced to agree with Garron and ordered the shutting down of the Refinery. Afternoon – the disease is spreading. I have called a general meeting to explain to the crew the importance of not leaving the rig, after Security stopped some people attempting to steal a life raft. A team of specialists have been promised by New World One. They should be here within the week.

9th. Continued mechanical failures. I feel very tired... Garron is gone.. Must sleep.

10th. No entry.

11th. (Today's date). No entry.

Surgeon Martens's Log

8th. Crew well. Riggins' flu improving.

9th. Treated 2 security men for puncture wounds, caused by some alien life forms that have invaded the ship. Have set up small lab in Caging Area to study them. The men look fine – there seem to be no added complications. Keeping them under observation in case of disease/biological reaction.

10th. Spikeys have a definite crystalline structure – extraordinary. They also appear to use helium in respiration. Security patients are improving. Riggins has been discharged.

7th. Crewman Williams from Deck C admitted, suffering from extreme exhaustion. Afternoon – he has fallen into a deep sleep.

8th. Crewman Williams fell into a coma and died last night. I still cannot determine cause of death. Two new cases from C Deck admitted. There must be a virus of some kind but I am unable to isolate it.

8th. The disease is spreading like wildfire. Sick Bay cannot handle them all, had to confine many to quarters. I am very worried – it is essential to confine the disease to the Rig. Several of the crew have died.

9th. Captain Straker has fallen ill. Afternoon – Captain has died. The plague seems to be acting faster. There are only five of us left now; me, Daniels, one of the security men and two other crewmen.

10th. Rogers (security) has left the Rig in a pressure suit. We tried to stop him, but he shot two of the crew – the stupid, selfish fool; with any luck he won't be picked up. Afternoon – Discovered that the cause of death involves the cessation of neuronic impulses in the central nervous system – as if all a person's nervous energy was drained. However, I am still unable to find any organism causing this. Evening – I think it is too late now. I am feeling drowsy... Where is Daniels?... It is only a matter of hours now.

11th. (Today's date). No entry.

SKY RIG

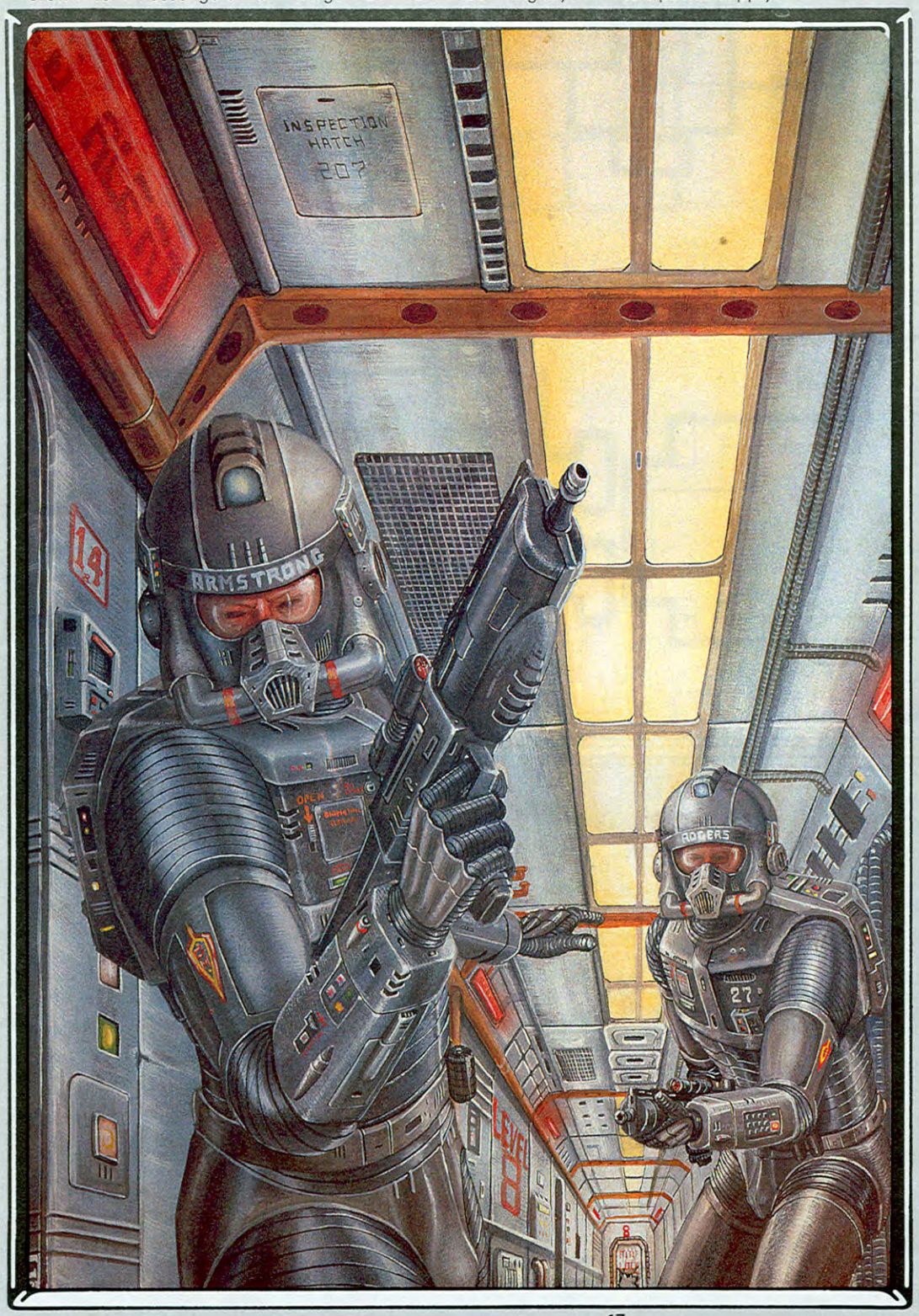
The Sky-Rig
This Sky-Rig is used to test new equipment and processes in working conditions. The equipment being tested now is a device which can extract rare gases from the atmosphere at a fraction of the normal cost. The rig's drives are non-standard anti-grav drives; these can be kept running constantly for many months at a time. The rig had a crew of 23 and 6 non-standard life rafts. These are built around a simple hydrogen ramjet. Each life raft masses 10 tons and can carry 10 passengers. The flight controls are entirely automatic consisting of just three buttons which activate and launch the raft. The raft uses the gas giant's atmosphere as fuel so once the raft is in orbit it will not be able to manoeuvre nor restart the jet engine. The life raft will complete three orbits of Skiddir after which time the orbit decays and the raft plummets planetward. On each orbit there is a chance that the life raft will be picked up by a ship answering the raft's distress beacon. This chance is: 15% on Orbit 1, 25% on Orbit 2 and 50% on Orbit 3.

Sky Rig (High Guard)
SZ-G604622-40000-00000-0 MCr2,600 TL12 7000 tons
Crew = 19 Passengers = 6 Cargo = 24 EP = 420 Agility = 4

Life Raft (High Guard)
QN-0305110-30000-00000-0 MCr5 TL12 10 tons
Crew = 0 Passengers = 10

Special Equipment
Pressure Suit. Unlike a Vacc suit, this is designed to withstand the crushing atmosphere of Skiddir. It is a large armoured suit with anti-grav modules built in. The hands and feet of the suit have electromagnets built into the suit, so the operator can 'stick' to the hull of the rig while working outside. A skill of Vacc Suit-2, or Battle Dress-2 is needed to operate the suit. In combat the suit counts as battle dress, but any hit that penetrates the suit will cause a malfunction, all moving parts will jam and no movement will be possible. Anyone shooting a weapon while wearing the suit does so at -3 to hit due to the suit's bulkiness. In normal gravity the suit can fly at a maximum speed of 350kph.

Life Support Machine. Medical-2 is needed to attach the machine to the patient. A character with Medical-1 can attempt hook up – throw 2d6, 8+ the attempt succeeded. If failed then the patient takes 1d6 damage. These machines are movable but must always be connected to a power supply.



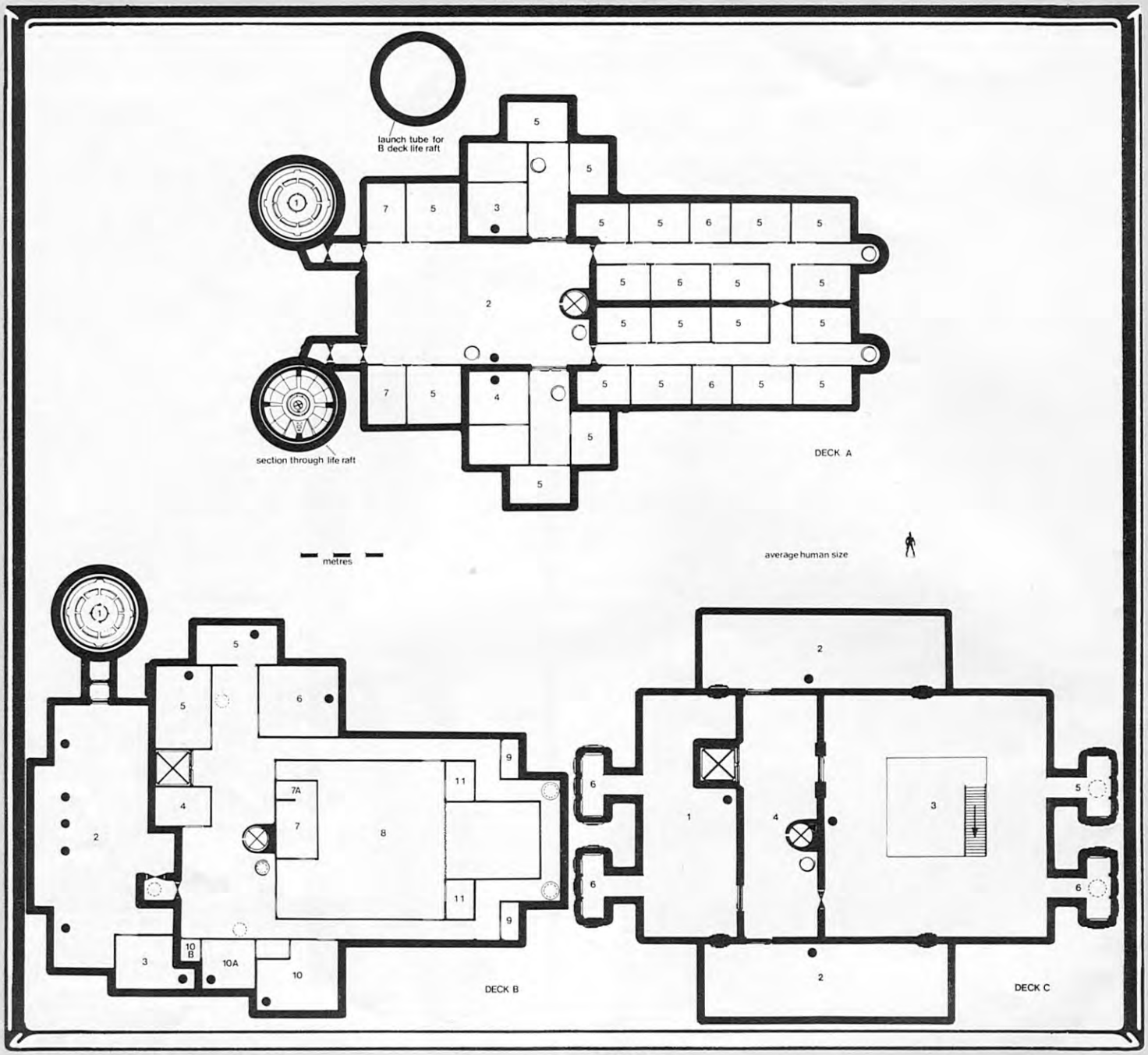
REFEREE'S NOTES
It is up to the referee to decide exactly what payment the players should receive, but it should be remembered that the cutter is only on loan from New World's government, and that the characters will be doing less than one game day's actual work.

The Journey to the Sky-Rig. Only encounter 3 will actually change the time the party arrives on the rig. Any other delay will have no effect. If encounter 6 occurs the players will find it much harder to succeed with the mission. If the spy is found he will seem to be friendly but once onboard the rig he will start giving away false information and may even attempt to sabotage parts of the rig. If the spy is not found then he will sabotage some areas of the rig, aiming to stop the players from finding out just what is going on. The spy will always try to leave without the players by using a life raft. One life raft will always be ready to save the players at the end of the time limit.

On the Sky-Rig. The referee should use the System Failure Table to create tension. Encounters with the lesser inhabitants of the rig are not keyed to any particular location, (except for the Scientist). The referee should let the players encounter them when they least expect it. The worker robot will only be found on C and D Decks, and the Spikeys will be found somewhere on E Deck. The System Failure Table should be kept to, but if the referee wants, he can lengthen or shorten the time slightly if he thinks it will increase the tension of the game. To give an idea of how long things take to do, it takes one minute to quickly search a stateroom and four to five minutes to search it thoroughly. It will take 7 minutes to read one of the logs.

Recovery from the Effects of the Energy Sucker. All affected equipment must be checked after it has been drained, or after that piece of equipment has left the rig, to see if it has been damaged in any way. Every character that caught the disease must also check at the same time. Throw 2d6. If the result is 2 or 3 then that piece of equipment has been damaged. It will cost 10-60% of its purchase cost to repair. For every affected character do the same except if they throw a 2 or a 3 they will permanently lose 1 point of Intelligence and 2 points of Dexterity, due to slight brain damage, caused by the disease.□

SKY RIG



INTERIOR DETAILS

A Deck, Crew's Quarters

1. Life Raft. One of the two life rafts will contain 3 dead crew members.

2. Lounge. Scattered around this area are low tables and comfortable chairs. The wall between the two life raft hatches is a large viewing screen, at present showing a recorded quiz show (fortunately, 45 mins after the party arrive onboard the screen will fail).

3. Captain Straker's Cabin. A double sized stateroom, full of momentoes of old commands and the Captain's log (see Referee's Information section for details). The dead body of the Captain is on the bed.

4. Production Manager's Cabin. A similar area to the Captain's cabin, but is much neater. In one corner is a larger scale model of the Rig.

5. Stateroom. All these staterooms contain various personal items. There will also be 7 dead crew members, all who have died of the disease. If the players want to waste time they will find Cr564 in cash, and 1,200 credits' worth of goods.

6. Fresher.

7. Storage Space.

B Deck, Control and Recreation Level.

1. Life Raft.

2. Bridge. A large room filled with control consoles. From here the refinery can be controlled as well as the flight path of the rig itself. The consoles show that the rig is in perfect working order, but will also show the parts of the rig that are not working, (no reason should be given by the referee about why things are not working).

3. Computer Room. A computer Mk2 is fitted in this room. An extensive back-up memory has also been installed.

4. Locker. This area contains the usual types of equipment found in all ship's lockers, in a locked rack on one wall are 5 Snub pistols with 15 HE and 30 Trang rounds.

5. Offices.

6. Library.

7. Kitchen.

7a. Cold Store.

8. Recreation Area. This was the rig's main common room where the crew ate their meals and relaxed. Amongst a pile of broken furniture near the folding doors is the body of one of the rig's crew. The area on the other side of the folding doors was used as a gymnasium.

9. Fresher.

10. Sick Bay. Four life support machines line one wall, all occupied by crew members affected by the disease. If they are removed from the machines they will die. All four are unconscious. The life support machines will fail after 90 mins unless another power supply can be found.

10a. Surgery. A small operating theatre. On the floor is the body of the rig's surgeon, Martens. His Log will be found nearby.

10b. Air Lock. Used to keep infected air out of operating room.

11. Storage Space.

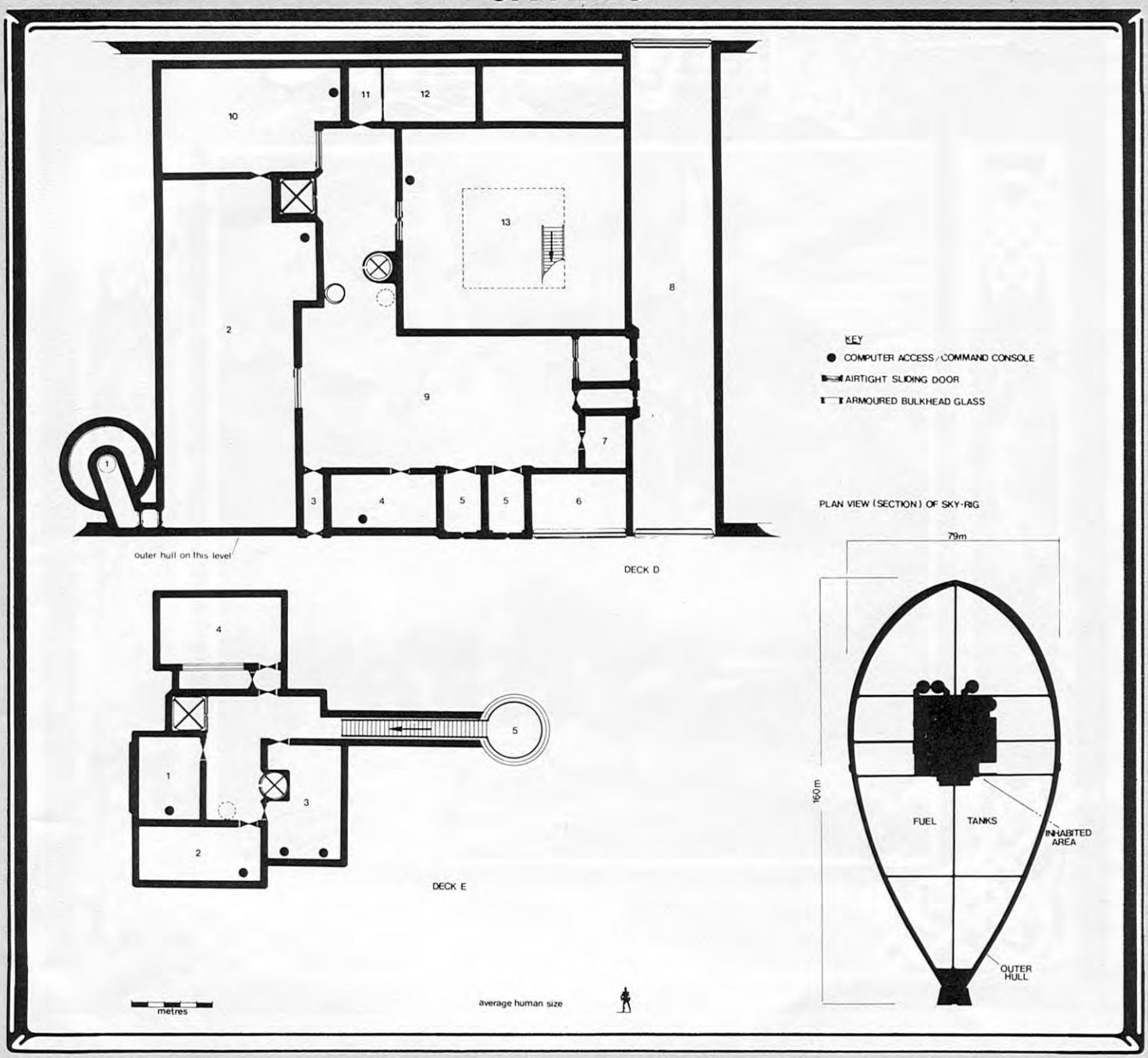
C Deck, Power Plant and Drives Level

1. Power Plant. In perfect working order, it will continue to run right up to the end. The Energy Sucker is absorbing the power, diverting it away from where it is needed. The Energy Sucker will not be seen even in this area.

2. Drive Rooms. These two areas contain the rig's drive units. They are in perfectly good condition. Two more dead crew members will be found draped over control panels.

3. Upper Refinery Level. A large amount of heavy machinery occupies this area. A vast mass of pipes lead to the central refinery, the top of which rises through an open area in the middle of the room.

SKY RIG



4. *Loading Area.* Two fork lift trucks stand idle; one is loaded with a large metal valve.
5. *Maintenance Access Area.* Lying here is the body of a dead mechanic. He was removing an inspection hatch leading to an empty fuel tank. If the players complete the mechanic's job they will find the central parts of the Energy Sucker within. The players will not be able to see the body of the Energy Sucker since it is hidden by the bloated bulk of the Energy Sac. The Energy Sucker will not react to the players unless they attack it, in which case it will draw in 2d6 tentacles each round and defend itself.
6. *Maintenance Access Area.* As 5, but without mechanic or the monster.

D Deck, Refinery Level

1. *Life Raft.*
2. *Gas Separation Planet.* This machine separates the rare but useful gases out of Skiddir's atmosphere. This is a very large machine, filling most of this room.
3. *Air Lock.* Inside will be found another dead crew man (Rogers, Security). He is in a pressure suit, and carries a body pistol with a half empty magazine (he shot the crew men in the Lower Refinery).
4. *Robotics Control Centre.* Many control panels line the walls of this room. Each console controlled one of the worker robots. At present only one console is operating. The controls are not functioning but a TV picture will be seen, this picture is being transmitted by the last working robot. This picture will show some part of the interior of the rig.
5. *Air Locks.* These large air locks are designed to launch and retrieve worker robots.
6. *Fuel Transfer Equipment.* This sealed area contains the machinery necessary to transfer refined fuel from the rig to a waiting tanker.
7. *Locker.* Storage space for four pressure suits.
8. *Cutter Bay.* This tube acts as a hangar for cutters bringing food etc to the rig. The player's cutter will have to dock here.
9. *Cargo Hold.* Stacked high with crates containing newly designed machine parts.
10. *Workshop.* Along one wall are racks for holding the rig's robots, 6 of the 10 racks are occupied with deactivated robots. In the centre of the room are heavy duty work benches; a small crane is fixed to the ceiling.
11. *Electronics Store.* Spare parts for the rig's electrical equipment.
12. *Store.* Metal sheet, pipes of all shapes and sizes, as well as coils of steel rope are stored in this area.
13. *Lower Refinery.* This is the base section of area 3 on C Deck. It has a similar mass of pipes and ducts. At the bottom of the stairs are two bodies. Both have been shot.

E Deck, Science Level

1. *Probe Launching Area.* Small unmanned probes are dropped into the clouds through a small air lock. Wall racks hold 11 unused probes.
2. *Weather Centre.* Instruments for recording weather patterns.
3. *Laboratory.*
4. *Caging Area.* The Spikeys were kept here [see encounter section]. During the confusion of the last few days they escaped, smashing the glass wall and killing one of the crew. His body remains in the middle of the floor in a pool of cold blood.
5. *Observation Blister.* At the end of the flight of stairs is an armoured glass observation post. Thi sroom has the only "windows" on the entire rig, and allows direct observation of cloud formations as well as the underside of the rig. The blister is crammed with all kinds of measuring equipment. It also contains the last surviving crew member Daniels [see encounter section, the Scientist].□

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FOR THE BLOOD IS THE LIFE

The Living Dead in RuneQuest

RuneRites *is a regular column for* RuneQuest *players, edited by Dave Morris.*

RQ *uses the term* undead *for beings which have no spirit self and, cut off from the universal psychic 'flow', do not naturally regenerate POW. This still leaves the classification of creatures such as ghouls and whirlvishes uncertain [see* RuneRites, WD54*]. I call these* living dead *– beings which maintain some sort of existence after death because their life-force is replaced by magic. The spirit continues to regenerate POW normally, but the dynamic force of the living dead creature (equivalent to a living being's CON) is often precariously dependent on the special occult process that animates it.*

It has always seemed unfortunate to me that the Gloranthan vampire has little motive for draining blood. My own campaign includes *vampyrs*, living dead which depend for their existence on draining blood from the living. If the vampyr goes without blood, its CON begins to decrease. After seven days without blood the vampyr loses 1 point of CON. Five days later, another point is lost, and another point every four days thereafter. For each CON point lost after the first, the vampyr also loses 1 STR point. When CON reaches 01 (by which time the creature will appear quite decrepit) the STR drops to 03. This condition prevails for one month, and then the vampyr becomes truly dead (though even then the soul is not released until the head is cut from the body). A vampyr can slow this CON loss by staying in its coffin – each night that it rises is equivalent to two nights of resting dormant.

The maximum quantity of blood that a vampyr can drain in a single night is one pint. The victim loses CON and STR as shown on the Blood Loss Table. Each point of CON that the victim loses adds 1 point to the vampyr's CON; when this reaches species maximum, further points go towards healing any damage the vampyr has taken, at the rate of a *healing 6* for every CON point lost to the victim. This is the only way vampyrs can heal themselves.

Vampyrs are not affected by non-Runic metals unless impaled by the weapon – and even then only half the *minimum* impalement damage is taken. *Bladesharp* and other spells will damage the vampyr, of course, as will Runic metal weapons. A vampyr does not collapse when it has taken damage equal to its hit points. It must be hacked apart until it cannot fight on (like a zombie). If for any reason the head of a fallen vampyr is not severed then it could be healed – perhaps by a *charmed* servant – by causing blood to gush from a living victim onto the vampyr's body.

Vampyrs have the power to *charm*. This requires the vampyr to talk to the intended victim for at least thirty seconds, and the two must be within ten metres of one another throughout this time. Success is determined by a CHA (vampire's) against POW (victim's) resistance roll. *Charm* cannot be used in melee – it must be normal conversation. A *charmed* victim allows the vampyr to do whatever it chooses with him/her. Previously charmed characters have a penalty of -10% for successive charm attempts by the vampyr.

A vampyr can be destroyed by driving a stake through its heart and cutting off its head. The stake interrupts the mystic energy flow that sustains the vampyr, causing it to become in all respects like a normal corpse. If the stake is later removed, the vampyr comes back to 'life' because the soul has remained latent within the body. Severing the head frees the spirit, irreversibly ending the vampyr's living death.

Exposure to sunlight immediately removes the vampyr's power to *charm* and its invulnerability to bronze weapons. It also loses 2 points of CON per round that it remains in sunlight, and will become inanimate if CON reaches zero. Removing the head will then destroy it. If a vampyr which is dormant in its coffin is exposed to sunlight then it suffers no CON loss but is held trapped, unable to rise, until the sun sets.

Vampyrs cannot cross pure running water except by bridge, boat or on someone's back. Swamp and marshland do not bother them, however.

Vampyrs can be driven back with the Life Fertility Rune. If strongly presented by someone initiated into a Life cult (Chalana Arroy), this Rune forces the vampyr to retreat so as to keep at least 4m between itself and the Rune. If backed into a corner so that it cannot circle around the Rune, the vampyr will go berserk (as a *fanaticism* spell) in its attempt to escape.

The Death Rune has no effect on vampyrs, many of whom worship it in some form.

	Vampyr	Demi-vampyr
STR:	*species max x1½*	*species max x1½*
CON:	*species max*	*species max*
SIZ:	*as in life*	*as in life*
INT:	-	
POW:	*as in life*	*as in life x½*
DEX:	*as in life +d6*	*as in life -d4*
CHA:	*as in life +d6*	-
Move:	*as in life +2*	*as in life*

Anyone who dies from a vampyr's bite will become a vampyr or (more usually) a *demi-vampyr*. A true vampyr is created when the vampyr allows the victim to drink some of its own blood at the same moment that it drains the victim's blood. This costs the vampyr 1d4 points of characteristic POW (recoverable through increase rolls) and ensures that the victim will arise three nights later as a new vampyr.

If the vampyr does not sacrifice its power in this ritual, the victim will arise as a mere demi-vampyr. This creature drains blood like a normal vampyr, but cannot *charm* (and is not resistant to bronze weapons) and so must resort to random attacks and waylaying travellers on lonely country roads. The demi-vampyr has essentially animal-level intelligence, but is able to utter phrases and pleas for help in order to lure victims even though it has no real understanding of what it is saying. If meleed, the demi-vampyr will battle ferociously (often with only very crude weapons or its bare hands, and with a maximum fighting skill of DEXx5) until it sees a chance to escape. Demi-vampyrs will usually obey simple commands from the vampyr which created them, but will flee if endangered.□

Blood Loss Table

(Effects shown assume a normal, human adult)

Blood lost	*CON loss*	*STR loss*	*Time to Recover one pint***
1st pint	1 point	1 point	5 days
2nd pint	another 2 points	another 3 points	7 days
3rd pint	another 4 points	another 6 points	9 days
4th pint	another 6 points	another 9 points	12 days
5th pint	(death*)		

* The victim will, of course, already be dead if CON has reached 0 before this.
** A healing 6 spell can be used in place of five days recovery time.

This is the second instalment of a series about role-playing the Ninjas of medieval Japan in AD&D, RuneQuest *and* Bushido.

NIGHT'S DARK AGENTS

Creating and Playing Ninja Characters by Chris Elliott and Richard Edwards

Last issue, we outlined the role of the historical ninja, and the range of skills and equipment that made possible their uncanny feats. This part suggests ways of incorporating them into *AD&D* and *RuneQuest*, and expanding them as a profession in *Bushido*. As far as possible, this has been done within the original rules, rather than by creating new ones. This should make it easier to integrate the material with current campaigns.

NINJA IN AD&D

Both the assassin and monk character classes can be used as the basis for ninja characters, the assassin having skills of disguise and a secondary role as a spy, and the monk having skills derived from the martial arts. We have, therefore, given rules which are based on a synthesis of these two classes.

The rigorous early training of ninja would be reflected in high attribute scores for dexterity and constitution, and overall we suggest the following minimum scores:

S	I	W	D	C	Ch
12	11	9	15	11	5

Hit points should be rolled as for thieves and assassins, and the same table used for experience levels. The concept of alignments is not one that fits very well with this sort of character, but the closest is probably that of true neutral. When all the druids reading this have finished throwing fits, the reason for this is that the ninja's use of any and every form of deceit and violent death sprang from professionalism rather than any commitment to the principle of evil, and at its highest, their role was to act as keepers of the social balance in a society divided against itself. *AD&D* is biased toward humans, but within the guidelines in the *Player's Handbook*, there is no reason why other races should not have similar castes, although because of the clan basis on which they would also be organised, it would be almost unthinkable for a non-human to be accepted into a human ninja clan, and vice versa. The use of magic is tricky, because although all classes in *AD&D* can use magic items, only two can cast spells, and the ninja are neither magicians nor priests. As with monks, they should be able to use enchanted weapons, rings, and the magic items designed for thieves and assassins, and gain the ability to attempt scrolls at higher levels. Whether or not they are allowed to learn some clerical spells to correspond to the kuji-no-in (nine signs) is for you and your referee to agree. Some suggestions are given below if you decide to do this. Generally speaking, though, it is not the principle of classes other than MUs and Clerics using magic that unbalances a game, so much as careless refereeing which allows too rapid progression of characters or the acquisition of too many magic items too easily.

To prevent ninja characters becoming supermen (or women) we have left the more specialised skills as optional extras which can be studied at the expense of further progression in the basic abilities. This means that on reaching second level and above, a ninja can opt to leave a basic ability such as silent movement unchanged, and instead gain a new skill. Once this has been done, the same decision must be made each time a new level is gained, ie improve abilities already gained, including specialist skills with more than one level, or gain new ones.

Player character ninja must always be members of a clan/ryu (school) and this should also apply to NPC ninja unless there are convincing reasons otherwise. Any treasure and magic items acquired must be surrendered to the referee, acting as the chunin (middle man) controlling the ninja, but items may be loaned back when needed for specific missions.

NINJA IN RUNEQUEST

The skills of ninjutsu can be simulated in *RuneQuest* without too many problems, but the ninja need a non-Gloranthan setting. While the guidelines below are compatible with the basic rules, therefore, we have not tried to relate them to the various cults and groups covered there and in the supplements.

Because of their early training, even young ninja were already far above the average in terms of physical abilities, as well as having a good grounding in a daunting variety of specialist skills. To reflect this in a character would mean starting them at advanced skill levels, and thus giving them an unfair advantage over ordinary characters. In an established campaign, where other players are already well advanced, you could use the rules for apprenticeship on p104 of the rulebook, and assume that five years training in all the appropriate skills has been given. The other alternative is to start a ninja character as any other, and assume that they are learning the hard way, by being given missions. Whether they keep a share of any loot to pass to the ryu as their fee, or receive nothing, or whether the other players pay a fee to the referee for their services is a matter of choice and the circumstances of the campaign. They should not earn money of their own, or acquire valuable items, but should have the benefit of free training and equipment from their ryu to compensate.

It is desirable for ninja characters to have minimum Strength and Dexterity scores of 13, and high Constitution and Intelligence. Size can be low, and charisma is unimportant. Power is dealt with below, along with the use of magic, but it should ideally start low and be increased through experience.

SKILLS

These were outlined in the first part of this series, and are now given as character abilities. Some additional information is given, mainly aimed at *Bushido* players and referees, but which should also be of general interest.

Costume

AD&D: The ninja's costume (*shinobi shozoku*) is only equivalent to AC10, and even if you use their trick of sewing steel rods into the sleeves to block sword cuts, it still only becomes the equivalent of a shield, AC9. Armour was worn, but mainly on military missions, and not always then, and would in any case interfere with stealthy skills. The 'Effective Armour Class' column from the Monk class can be used to represent unarmed combat skills, though. The only other alternative is to avoid combat like the plague, and fight dirty when you have to. (A good bet in any case.)

RuneQuest: The trick mentioned above can be considered as being equivalent to a parry with chainmail sleeves, but shouldn't be relied upon.

Bushido: As well as concealing their tools and weapons in pockets of their costume, ninja also carried two types of soles for their tabi (shoes). One was a rubber/gum compound, for grip, and the other a cotton floss material for silence.

Stealth Skills

AD&D: These correspond to Move Silently, Hide in Shadows and Hear Noise. In the water, ninja should not receive penalties for combat, due to their training. By special breathing techniques, they could stay submerged for three minutes, or ten using an air bubble trapped in their costume, and indefinitely using a snorkle. Treat all as basic skills.

RuneQuest: Use the thief skills of Camouflage, Hide in Cover and Move Quietly. Normal swimming rules apply, but bear in mind the comments above.

Bushido: Ninja could swim upright carrying objects without wetting them, and use similar techniques to write or draw maps while treading water. By use of floats, they could move heavy or bulky objects just under water.

Endurance and Agility Skills

AD&D: Use the movement rates for monks, and also allow sideways movement at normal rates. This technique, called *yoko aruki* (sideways walking) allowed ninja to move through very narrow spaces, or to hug the walls of corridors and buildings, and also made it impossible to tell from the tracks which way they had been going. These are basic skills. To simulate binding and escape, or use of *nawanuke-jutsu* (suppleness) to squeeze into or through tiny spaces, a roll can be made against dexterity. Failure to bind a captive gives them a chance to escape, and failure of other areas can be at the referee's discretion. Binding, or *hojojutsu*, is a single level specialism, escape is a basic skill, as are other applications of suppleness. The rules for climbing walls should be modified when climbing aids are used, as these will considerably increase the chances of success.

RuneQuest: The normal daily movement rates should be adjusted to take account of the distances ninja could travel, while indoors a basic rate of 10 movement units should be a good level. The normal rules for climbing and jumping work well enough, but nawanuke jutsu and *chakuzen-jutsu* (ceiling walking) can be treated as separate skills.

Bushido: Ninja used poles or springboards (pulled up after them to prevent discovery) to clear walls eight, nine, or ten feet high, and this gained them a reputation for superhuman leaps. By use of an acrobatic 'ricochet' technique, they could in fact actually clear up to 25' lengthways in a single jump.

Survival and Woodcraft Skills

AD&D: Ninja should be allowed tracking skill equivalent to a ranger's, as a basic skill, and also the ability to live off the land outdoors, but not in a dungeon. They can use the special rations mentioned below in those, however.

RuneQuest: Tracking will be a skill taught by ninja ryu, as will survival, although the latter should be rolled on a daily basis, with failure leading to a loss of 1 point of Con per day, recovered at the same rate as damage from wounds. The rations below will avoid this problem, and can be prepared as a 'potion'.

Bushido: Between missions, your character can while away their leisure making *kito-gan*. These are tablets made from ground rice, millet dust, wheat germ, potato flour, Job's Tears (a type of plant), carrot scrapings, dried hakobe grass, and other secret ingredients. They provided field rations, and were alleged to delay thirst for up to five days.

Martial Arts

AD&D: Rather than using the unarmed combat rules on p72 of the *DMG* (Pummelling, Grappling and Overbearing), it is easier to use the monk's table for open hand attacks. This is a basic skill, but characters opting to learn *yubi-jutsu* (nerve strikes) as a specialist skill can add the ½HP per level to damage as monks. Those studying *yadome-jutsu* (arrow cutting) can knock away or dodge missiles like monks using their hands or weapons. Use the assassin's 'To Hit' table, and the same rules for weapon proficiency when dealing with armed combat, and take the bastard sword (ninjato), staff, and dart (shuriken) as initial weapons. The rules for grenades and breath weapons will cover powder attacks using blinding eggs or blowguns, and *iai-jutsu* (fast draw) can be treated as an advanced skill giving +1 to initiative for each level learned. The hex based combat system on p69 of the *DMG* is a help, if you don't already use it.

RuneQuest: The *RQ* rules for punches, kicks, grappling, defence, etc, can serve as a basis for martial arts. For *koppo-jutsu* (bonebreaking) treat the hands as light or heavy cesti, and progress as a normal weapon skill. *Yubi-jutsu* (nerve strikes) can be treated as claw attacks, with each successive level increasing by 1% the chance of a critical hit which will disable the limb concerned. Bearing in mind the comments on p100 of the basic rules, you can use statistics for the bastard sword, staff, sickle etc, for their ninja equivalents. Treat shuriken as throwing knives, using the rules for pitched shots, and for chain weapons assume a grappling attack is made to throw an opponent, without the chance for them to block a successful hit. They can also be used like a grain flail. Dave Morris' article on *RQ* samurai in *WD40* suggests treating *iai-jutsu* as a skill reducing the strike rank of a sword with successive levels of mastery.

Bushido: Although it is not listed as a ninja bugei, you should include *bojutsu* (staff). It was characterisitic of ninja weapons that they were often disguised, and the simple traveller's staff could become a deadly weapon, or itself conceal another, such as a chain or a blade. The nine shuriken (a lucky number) usually carried could be used as tools to dig, drill, and scrape, and an iron tobacco pipe could be just that, a weapon, or a snorkel. Ninjutsu is an approach, rather than a collection of exotic hardware, and the ninja were supreme improvisors and adapters.

Chemistry and Herbalism

These skills can be used to prepare poisons, explosives, secret inks, medicines and antidotes. It was common to poison water sources or leave out poisoned food to trap ninja, and because of this they not only avoided such hazards, but were expert at detecting poisoned substances through their scent and appearance. In *AD&D*, ninja can manufacture and detect poisons as an assassin would (use Find Traps), and can call on clan resources for the other items. The alchemist skills in *RuneQuest* and the Taste Analysis skill can be used in the same way.

Hypnotism

Saiminjutsu (ninja hypnotism) can be treated as sleight of hand, suggestion, magic, or a bit of each. *AD&D* players can use Pick Pockets for sleight of hand tricks, and ninja could be allowed limited clerical spell ability to represent use of the kuji-no-in. This should be a specialist skill, only available at 3rd level and above, and limited to appropriate spells such as *detect magic, find traps* and *command*. One spell per level is gained, to a maximum of nine, and these are limited to those useable by a cleric two levels lower than the ninja. In *RuneQuest*, the kuji-no-in can function as a focus for battle magic such as *ironhand, detect traps, countermagic*, etc. These should only be taught by a Buddhist temple, which will require payment by service. Pick Pockets skill can be used for sleight of hand. *Bushido* players can treat hypnotism as a Task, with a value depending on the circumstances, and use a BCS for sleight of hand similar to other practical skills. Don't make the effects too powerful in either case.

Ninja Tactics

Now you have a character with an arsenal of dirty tricks, the next question is how you use them. This is the subject of the third of these articles, which contains information on strategy and tactics. The difference between life and death can be a small thing like forgetting to use insect repellent. The ninja, Kirigakure Saizo, was speared through the floor by alert guards in the room above, who had noticed mosquitos hovering over his position.

How do you slip past sentries as if invisible, and confound pursuers by disappearing into thin air? How, when you are surrounded in a building which is then set alight, can you emerge unscathed? All this, and more, in the final part of *Night's Dark Agents*, next issue!□

AND THE UTTERANCES OF MANY DID FALL UPON THE DEAF EARS OF THE AUTHOR.

Until, at last, Stan the Thin, purveyor of arcadian fantasy, spake unto the Author, saying "Whatever happened to Androx?"

Thus it came to pass.....

As the humanoid shell, that had been Androx, became progressively loopy, the essential personality was awash with a kaleidoscope of shattering emotions. Gradually, sensibility returned to the aghast id as it struggled to identify itself. All around was nothing. No input, just a black void.

He thought he might be dead, trapped within a split-second for eternity.

Then the light came.

From no particular source it surrounded him, a green spectral glow that brought companionship, or at least a break from the monotony of total darkness. After a while, or maybe several centuries, it also got exceedingly boring, never varying in shade or brightness.

He decided he was dead...and in Hell.

What a simple idea! It must be possible to get a million intelligences into a single bottle, provided there was no stimulation, and after his own experiences that seemed very probable. No sooner had he arrived at this conculsion that the lights went out again!

Weight returned to him.

Then he heard a Voice on the very limits of his perception. Slowly it came nearer, rich and resonant with the timbre of authority. Soon words made themselves known to him.

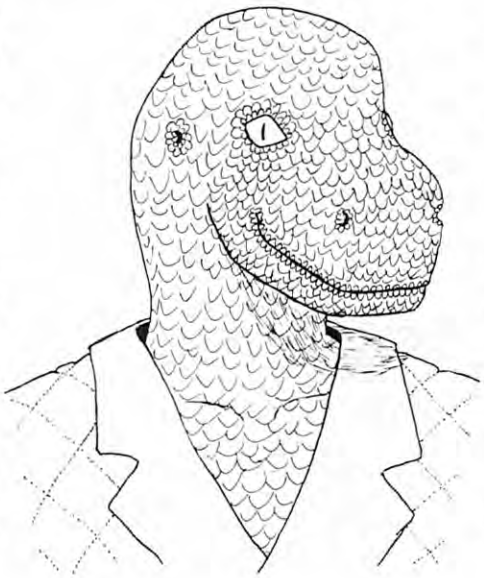
"...should be able...advice is to take..."

He could feel his body forming around himself. Voice continued.

"...slowly accustom yourself to physical concepts. I think you might be ready to open your eyes now."

He did.

As the eyelids slid hesitantly back, blurred images slowly drew into focus. He was staring



at a ceiling, supported by soaring arches of stone and shifting in the light of (he swivelled the eyeballs to the right) chandeliers. He was lying on his back.

"There's a clever chap."

Androx tried out the neck muscles to obtain a look at Voice.

A head more lizard than human slipped into view. It smiled at him.

"Good to have you with us, old boy. My name is Unimportant, but you can call me Sir."

Dressed in a quilted smoking jacket and holding a cocktail glass in its right clawed hand, Unimportant sat in a high-backed cane chair. It settled back, took a sip of the drink and chuckled wickedly.

"Where am I?" Androx tried out the larynx.

Pain lashed through his left arm. Unimportant tutted and shook its head.

"Where am I, Sir?" Androx corrected himself through gritted teeth.

"You already know that, my dear fellow, otherwise you'd still be radiating that piquant shade of green."

"May I move Sir?" It must be telepathic.

Pain lashed up his right arm.

"Sir is telepathic." It corrected him. "Yes you may. I hope you'll look after that body, we're not in the habit of just giving them away."

As he swung his legs down he looked at his new vehicle. Not bad, no obvious defects, quite young and an improved set of gonads.

"It's the usual contract, normal lifespan and get as many souls as you can. What happens after that depends on how you do. Is it a deal?"

"Have I got all my powers, Sir?"

"Of course."

"Can I go to any time, Sir?"

"Yes."

"Then it's a deal, Sir." This time Androx smiled.

"No other questions?" it quizzed.

"No Sir."

"Hmmm. They usually want to know more."

"No offense, Sir, it's just that there's a certain writer I'm rather eager to visit..."

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Lew's Views *is a regular discussion column for inexperienced role-players and referees, by Lew Pulsipher.*

The Life of a Retired Wizard

Recently I read an old article about magic-shops. Aside from the generally doubtful nature of the whole idea, I was struck by the author's notion that retired 'wizards' would run magic shops, living in the back room or in the storey above. Is this really the way a retired wizard would spend his time?

To some extent this question turns on what 'wizard' means. Those who play *D&D/AD&D* tend to think of wizards as extremely powerful individuals. Perhaps we ought to substitute 'magician'. So your everyday hedge-magician who's made a little money and gained a few skills, but who doesn't want to undertake dangerous adventures all his life, makes a living from his magic shop? Perhaps... except where does a hedge-magician, or anyone who hasn't become quite powerful, get the magic-items to stock the store? In my view, anyone who has enough magic items to stock a store is far more than a hedge-magician. Anyone powerful enough to have that many magic items is too powerful to spend his retirement living over a shop.

Consider: isn't a powerful adventurer a little like a well-known gunfighter in the Old West, or a powerful politician, someone who has made many enemies on his road to success? Can a powerful retired adventurer of any class merely tend a little shop and hope to be left alone? And could a powerful adventurer, accustomed to an exciting, sometimes luxurious life, settle down to become a mere shopkeeper? How many gunfighters, or politicians, could follow such a course?

So I asked myself, what would I do if I were a retired wizard? In fact, my oldest *D&D* character recently reached 'wizard' level (eleventh), just one below what he regards as retirement level. After all, in *AD&D* one can't make any magic items other than scrolls and potions until one reaches twelfth level. Orion has never planned to run a magic shop, but he does see the possibility of supporting himself, when he no longer has adventuring income, by selling an occasional magic item every few years. None-the-less, he'd never expose himself by (or accept the indignity of) living in a room above a shop! Although he's Lawful/Good and consequently has relatively few (living) enemies, those enemies he does have are *very* powerful. Orion, like most wizards, is more than a little paranoid – if you can say someone is paranoid when 'people' really *are* out to get him! He almost never shows his face in public, preferring to work through his loyal followers or incidental casual hirelings.

Of course, circumstances may be somewhat different. A Good wizard may be highly respected and have many friends in a thoroughly Good-dominated area. In that case he might be far more likely to show himself and interact with the populace. The 'nicer' the area is, the less chance that someone would try to cheat the proprietor of a magic shop, or steal the contents thereof.

But how many areas are like this, particularly areas where player characters may be? Not many! Consequently, while the Good-alignment player characters might make an occasional journey to 'nicer' lands in order to trade magic items with a retired wizard, this would be a rare, major undertaking, not an everyday visit to the local magic shop. In a more typical, rather wild area, what steps would players have to take to gain an audience with a powerful magician, retired or otherwise? First, they'd have to learn that he exists at all, and that he isn't likely to be hostile. They'd hear rumours, or perhaps talk to local officials, and then read or hear about the great man's exploits in local records or stories. Second, they'd have to find out how to approach the wizard without getting trapped, blown up, or attacked by guards.

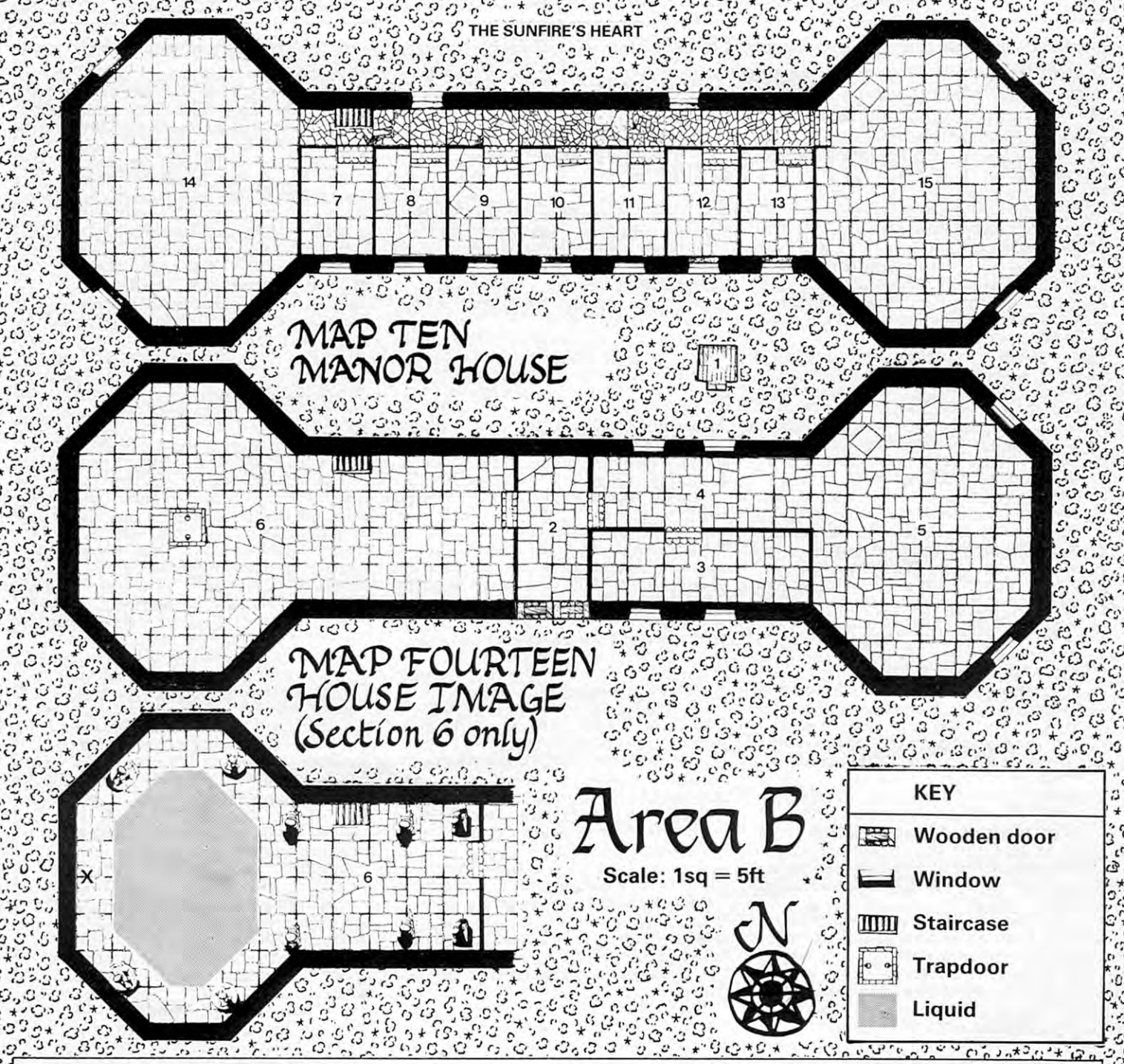
Third, after they reached the wizard's home they'd have to convince his under lings that they are worth his time. If the magician is cautious, he'll assure himself that his visitors are what they seem to be by using *detect evil, ESP*, and similar spells and items. This surveillance might be carried out by underlings or by The Man himself, well concealed and protected. Even if the visitors seem harmless, unless they have something unusual to offer, such as news or exotic tales, or money if the wizard is short of cash, why should he bother to deal with them?

A lot of these preliminaries depend on the personality and alignment of the wizard. I can see a Chaotic magician suddenly appearing alone on the city's streets just for the hell of it (rather like the ruler who walks the streets incognito?). The more unpredictable the magician, the harder it is to generalize about his treatment of visitors.

If the adventurers can arrange to deal with the magician, directly or through underlings, they may be disappointed by how little the magician is willing to stir from retirement; or if they want magic items, they'll find that even an item-making magician has only a small selection to offer. After all, he'll want most items for his own or his underlings' use, and most magic items take a long time to make.

In a world in which a great many people can make magic items, or in which thousands of minor magic items exist, magic shops run by magic-dabblers (probably not retired adventurers) could be relatively common. In this situation magic items would be analagous to microcomputers and electronic calculators, something you might find many shops. The more powerful pieces would be well-protected, and available only in specialist shops, and they'd be occasionally targets of professional thieves. Jewellery is another analogy (have you ever seen how well the crown jewels are protected?). In a more typical fantasy world, where magic items are rare, the modern analogy might be to mainframe computers (only more portable, of course). You can't just walk into a store and buy one, and in many parts of the US or Europe you could live hundreds of miles from the nearest source. You can bet security is tight around factories that produce mainframes, and would be stronger if the machines were as portable as magic items are.

Regardless of the amount of magic around, most retired adventurers with significant experience will have to take more precautions than are possible when living over a shop, or they won't enjoy retirement for long.□



Last issue left the players with one last place to go – the magical island of Rammas. Part II of this AD&D *adventure starts where Part 1* (WD56) *left off.* (New readers will need Part 1 to complete the adventure.)

THE SUNFIRE'S HEART

Part II: The Island of Rammas by Peter Emery

DM'S NOTES

Rammas (Map 9)

This is where the Dark Leopard and Lord Silver lived. Due to Telfior's disappearance they had been unable to pay the rent owed to the guild. They had with them 35 red xvarts (guards and general labourers), 10 yellow xvarts (miners), and 15 blue xvarts (sailors and house-servants) [see the *Fiend Folio* for Xvarts]. They were all peacefully devoted to mining *purpure* – the ore of an iron-like metal with a purplish sheen, when the Dark Leopard disappeared and Lord Silver had an argument with the red xvarts. They murdered him and fled to the other end of the island, much to the consternation of the loyal blue and yellow xvarts. Groups of 2-8 red xvarts occasionally probe across near to the eastern end of Rammas (roll as for wandering monster twice a day).

A. Stone Piers.

Two crumbling stone piers (known as 'Coldpiers' in Enswick), a 10' rowing boat is tied up at one of them.

B. Manor House.

This is a substantial two-storied fortified manor house with shuttered windows and surrounded by a high wall, built by the Earthfriends originally as a residence for the higher members of the order.

Jovian used to live here (see *DM's Introduction, Part I*). The chaotic will of the Heart permeated the fabric of the house, seeking him out. Realising that he was being assailed, Jovian abandoned the house, shortly before Lord Silver and the Dark Leopard arrived in 1680. They saw the house merely as a desirable residence, and tiring of Jovian's

constant warnings that it was no longer safe, they locked him up in 1682 and he died shortly afterwards. But the essence of the Heart was very strong in the house and a strange accident befell the Dark Leopard in consequence. Because of this concentration of power, psionics and spell casters will hear a hissing noise in their ears inside and in the vicinity of the house.

The party will meet the silent and harmless ghost of Lord Silver (cannot be turned by clerics) – a tall albino dressed in white with a black longsword. He will beckon the party into the house but always stay some distance ahead. He will lead them into the east bedroom (his own) where he will say the word 'Jovian' and disappear. He may reappear later and do exactly the same thing. The ghost is trying to help his friend the Dark Leopard by making them investigate the Heart (which is the source of the Leopard's problems [section D]). No door in the house is locked, unless noted.

Key to Manor House (Map 10)

1. Strongroom. A stone building with an iron door and a trapdoor in the floor leading down into a 10' x 10' cellar. The place has been rifled by the red xvarts, who left only one ingot worth 10gp.

2. Entrance Hall. The room is lined – floor, ceiling and walls – with bear skins, except for the doors to east and west, which are wood with metal studs. A wooden chandelier hangs from the ceiling. High on the north wall hangs a very cold shield in a greenish metal, with a peculiar design, similar to that on Almeris' brooch [see last issue, reference 35]. The shield is +1 but, bearing the name of Asustren, is likely to cause resentment among the islanders.

3. Kitchen. Contents: One fireplace with five metal pots, a spit, a stack of firewood, a row of hens, rabbits and hares hanging on hooks, all decaying and a dead xvart in red armour pinned to a kitchen table with a cook's knife.

4. Antechamber. The walls are covered with deerskins. There are three stands with suits of chainmail.

5. Banqueting Hall. Here is a table 20' long with benches. A cupboard on the southern wall contains stacks of pewter plates, drinking horns etc. The floor is covered with straw. The fireplace is plain and large with a metal grate and spit. The skull and antlers of a giant elk are on the north wall.

6. Store Room. A very large dark room, the floor of which is strewn with straw. It contains sacks of meal, barrels of salt meat, rope, firewood and other necessary stores, as well as several large barrels of wine. A trapdoor leads down into the cellar, a 15' x 15' room containing an enormous cask of brown ale on tap. There is a row of six wooden beer-mugs hanging on pegs on the wall. This store-room also contains the steps up to the next floor.

7. Bedroom. Empty.

8. Bedroom. This room contains 12 pallets of straw for smaller than human size figures.

9. Bedroom. Contains a small catapult broken down into sections. There are also a number of tools – spanners, hammers, planes, adzes, which have been left carelessly lying around.

10. Cell. Here is the skeleton of a man chained to the wall by manacles. His clothing has rotted away, but he is still wearing a light iron cap with the inscription 'Jovian'. (This is indeed the remains of Jovian Sturlasson, the last Earthfriend.)

11. This room contains a heap of old dirt and rubbish, broken pots etc. In the dirt are six small metal shields, five with the word 'Asustren' embossed on the front in large letters, but the sixth with the words 'Ascoln Almeris'.

12. The door to this is locked. Inside is a weaponless red xvart who has been locked in for some time. He is crazy with hunger and thirst and will try to dash out as quickly as possible.

13. Bedroom. Empty.

14. The Dark Leopard's Room. This is very bare. His bed is actually a long low table with a block of wood at one end for his pillow, the whole being spread over a blanket of leopard skins (the Leopard's 'hard man' image). On a table with a chair are spread out several scrolls, weighted down with bottles of ink. These appear to relate to mining operation, apart from one which is an unfinished letter reading, 'Dear Born Wolf, Many Thanks for your help in squaring Ghost Arms – you have done me a real service. I am afraid however, that our friend Telfior has not shown up yet this year. Don't talk to the Landlord yet, but perhaps you would ask around. We may have to arrange alternative...'. On the walls hang a number of swords, of all types, and two crossbows, together with the stuffed head of a leopard.

15. Lord Silver's Room. Before he was killed, the Heart was trying very hard to capture him, and its presence is particularly strong here (consequently the 'hissing in the ears' will be louder). Partly as a result, if the name 'Jovian' is spoken here (the name draws the attention of the Heart, Jovian being its last master) the speaker will be transported to a place outside the image of the house (see below). The walls of this room are bare. There is a large locked chest up against the south wall. It contains a hooded deerskin robe with antler frontlet and 30gp. On the east wall over the large fireplace is a picture of the house in winter covered in ice and snow. A figure in white is visible in the foreground.

Manor House Image

This is a reflection, almost identical in basic shape, of the real house and wall described above, called into being on a parallel plane by the Heart – quite why is another matter, but must have something to do with the Heart's 'possession' of the original house. This house contains several undoubted illusions, but many real things from the *Prime Material Plane* have become trapped inside as well.

The house and enclosure are covered in ice and snow, and it is very cold. Beyond the encircling wall is void, and characters wil not be able to pass outside the walls by any means. Spell casters and psionics hear the usual hissing in the ears in this section. Any object picked up here will disappear on leaving.

Except where noted, use the same manor house map as for this image (map 10). No door is locked. The following key is for the image only, if the players ever cross over.

1. A Woodshed. There is no trapdoor here.

2. Identical to the real manor house except that the shield on the wall looks brighter and newer.

3. Identical to the real house, but for the absence of the dead xvart and the fact that a window has been left open and caused the place to fill with snow.

4 and 5. Lair of a young white dragon with no hoard. It is sound asleep, and quite impossible to wake (or kill).

6. (Use separate Manor House Image, Map 14.) This room is very cold, and windowless, although lit by some soft glow. The walls, floor and ceiling are made of smooth white stone. Tall statues of men with haggard faces in black chainmail line the walls. The statues are covered in a film of thin ice.

The liquid in the pool is a deep blue and well below 0 degrees centigrade (automatic unconsciousness and death in three rounds for anyone falling in). There is a thin layer of mist over the surface of the pool. Beneath the waters of the pool lives a rather peculiar sort of polar bear (AC8; HD3; HTK16; Move: 9"; Damage: 2-9 (bite) semi-intelligent; Alignment: Neutral) with flippered feet. It will come out to attack anything within 2' of the pool.

Trussed up to a white pillar at the point marked x is a very beautiful woman with very fair hair and skin. The woman's name is Hilaria (HTK16; Alignment: CN). She is a:

FROST VAMPIRE

Armour Class:	5
Movement:	12"
Hit Dice:	2
Alignment:	CE or (unusually) CN
Intelligence:	Very
Damage:	See below

The weakest of vampires, they attack as a 4HD monster. When it scores a bite on a victim, it will fasten on and drain hit points at the rate of 1-10 per round, but it will always stop when the victim is down to 2 hit points. Drained hit points are added to the vampire's total to heal combat damage. Hit points in excess of this are added to the vampire's total for six turns only. The victim will feel extremely cold and will die of exposure unless wrapped up warmly. Thereafter, he must rest for 24 hours before healing, magical or otherwise, can commence, unless a *heal* spell is cast.

The vampire stops before the victim is dead because the victim will have no will to resist it in future (unless *remove curse* and *cure disease* are cast). Therefore the vampire can keep coming back for more at intervals when it feels like a little fresh blood and the victim has recovered his hit points. Victims of frost vampires do not become frost vampires themselves. The means of frost vampire propagation is a mystery.

Frost vampires cannot *charm*, are vulnerable to normal weapons and have only human strength. They can assume gaseous form at will, turn into white wolves and summon 1-4 rats once per turn. They have all the usual vampire vulnerabilities to stakes, garlic etc, although CN ones will not turn a hair at holy symbols. Three turns exposure to daylight kills them, although they do not need a special place to rest – anywhere out of direct sunlight will do. They are turned as wraiths.

Frost vampires' fangs only appear when attacking, but they cast no shadow and have no reflection. They will always try to befriend a party with a view to a sly attack. Chaotic Neutral ones may strike up bargains with their victims – ie help in exchange for a snack.

Hilaria will attempt to swoon into the arms of rescuers and get an attack in that way. If they are wary she will play a waiting game. She will be vague as to why she was tied up. If they comment on her lack of shadow/reflection, she will spin a yarn about her shadow and reflection having been stolen many years ago by a demon in mistake for her actual body.

On the west wall is a frieze entitled 'Asustren coming to north Aurassic Islands in winter, year 300.'

7. Empty and full of snow.

8. Here a man sits at a table with his back to the door, mechanically eating soup out of a pan with a large wooden spoon. He looks like the Dark Leopard. This is an illusory deceit of the *Heart*. The illusion will, of course, ignore everything and everyone.

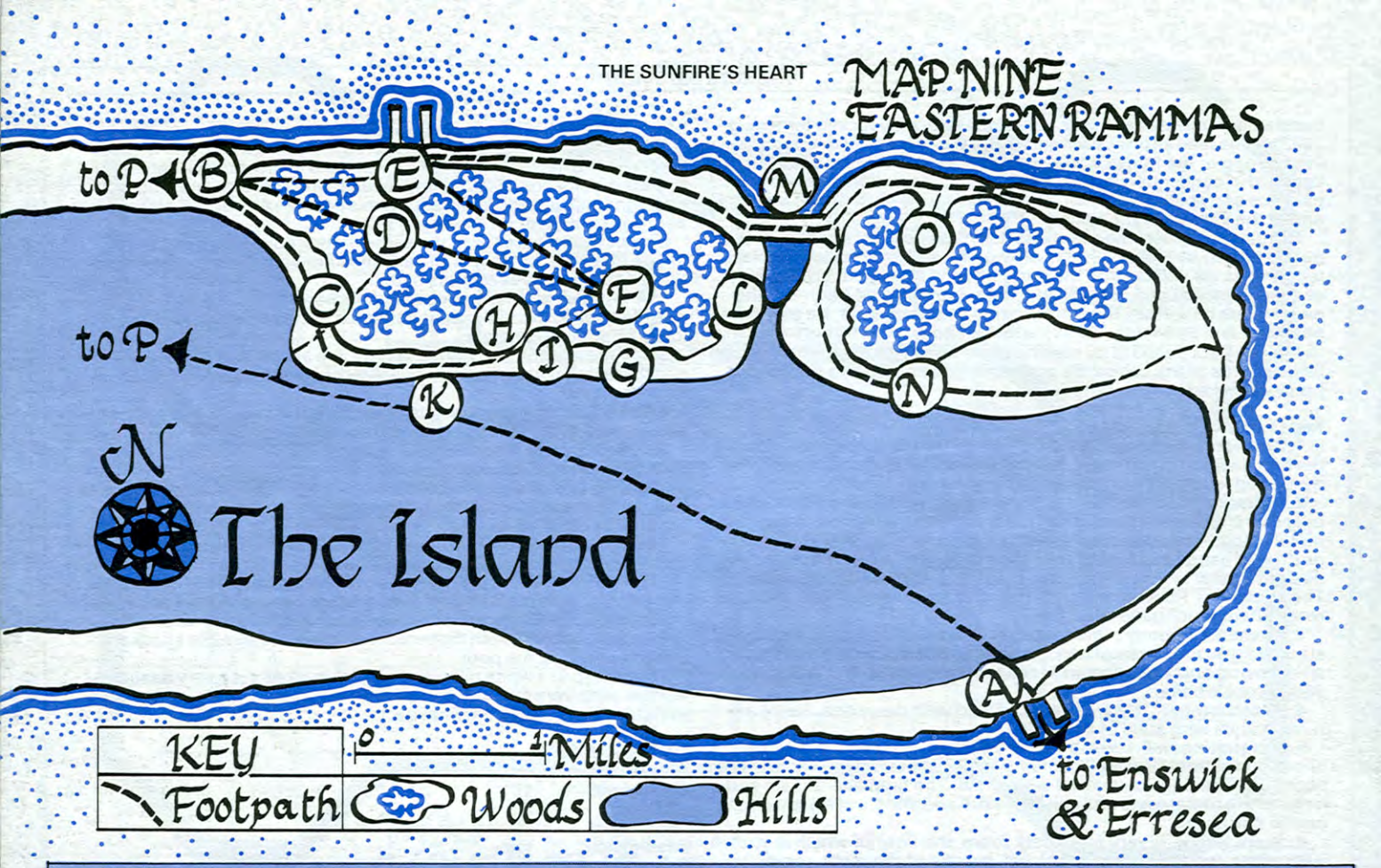
9. Empty.

10. An old, bearded man lies dead, manacled to the wall. He wears a metal cap with the inscription 'Jovian'. He is frozen solid. (This is another trick of the *Heart*.)

11, 12 and 13. Empty.

14. In the middle stands the immobile figure of a short female in black scale-mail and black cloak. She has fair hair and a slightly mad face. Despite being an illusion, this is a true likeness of Asustren - Elishauf. The room is otherwise empty.

15. Though the essence of the unstable Heart permeates the whole of the islands, this room may be said to be the current resting place of

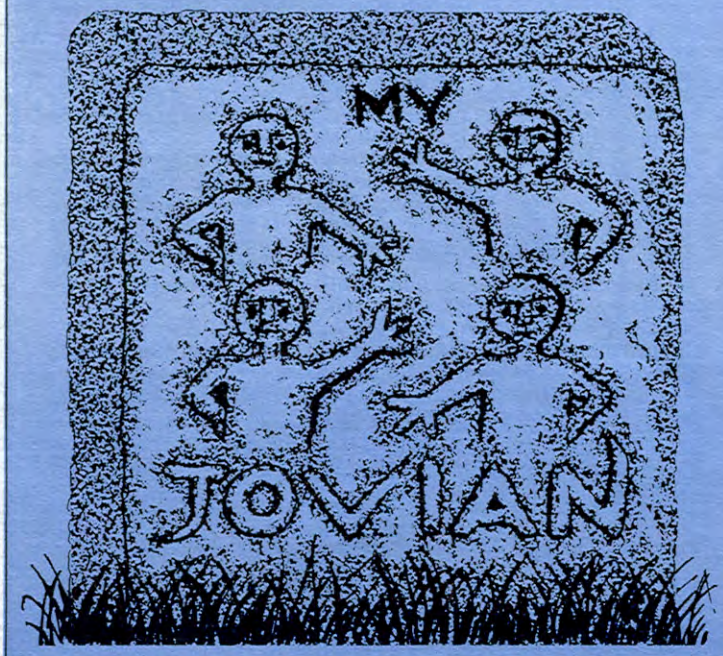


the central 'being' of the *Heart*. It has taken the form of a globe of radiance 10' in diameter. Those who look into it for more than a few seconds will think they see, as if from a great height, a group of 70 islands – the Aurassic Islands, in fact. If characters choose to concentrate their minds on any particular island or location, they will indeed perceive some details, but all in past time – the former great castles of the Emperors, sea battles, land combats. Over Erresea is seen to hang the vague shadow of some winged creature.

The hissing heard by spell-users and psionics is here very loud, and they will not hear anything else below the level of a shout. Touching the radiance results in a powerful jar and the individual being knocked unconscious (no saving throw) for 1-8 turns and taking 1 point of damage.

In the east wall is the entrance to a 10' wide passage, circular in cross section, but flattened at the bottom. This is the entrance to J (map 12) and is a link between the Heart and its original resting place. Note that the entrance does not lead *back* into the house.

Figure 1



C. Trampled Undergrowth.
If the party are looking closely, they will notice on the southern side of the path here, a trampling of the undergrowth. If they follow, it leads 15' into the wood, where there is a recently filled-in hole. 6' down are the decaying remains (dead for two weeks) of Lord Silver wrapped in a tarry sack, together with his black longsword. The red xvarts buried him here after sandbagging him.

D. Clearing.
In the centre of this clearing is a strange tree, of a deciduous type, unusual for the area, and its bark is smooth and mottled. Under the tree is a two-handed sword. This is in fact the Dark Leopard (AC10; HTK20; LVL3; LN; Fighter), who has been turned into a tree by being in close proximity to the Heart for many years. This happened to him two months ago. The usual 'hissing in the ears' effect will be noticed by psionics and spell-casters here. If the tree is chopped down, the Dark Leopard will revert to human form: he will also be dead. He will come back to normal if the Heart is summoned back to a stable form.

E. Stone Piers.
Under water are the remains of an ore carrying ship, to which the red xvarts set light in an orgy of destruction. From these piers a rutted cart track, purple with the dust of ore, runs east towards the mines.

F. Junction.
At the joining of several paths stand a large monolith 8' tall, with the inscription 'Jovian' and a series of pictures (see figure 1). These provide the clue for opening the four locks in the third door in the crypt of the church of Hesnog (section O). The pictures mean 'Bottom left – top right – top left – bottom right'.

G. Burial Ground.
A large Earthfriend burial ground with about 500 unmarked graves.

H. Pillar.
A pillar of white stone, 4' with the single word 'Jovian'. If the words on the spell-scroll number 1 hidden in the crypt of the church of Hesnog (see N) are spoken here, a fire will spring up on the rock-face immediately to the south of the pillar. It will burn for two rounds and then go out, revealing a stone door (not locked), which is the entrance to area I.

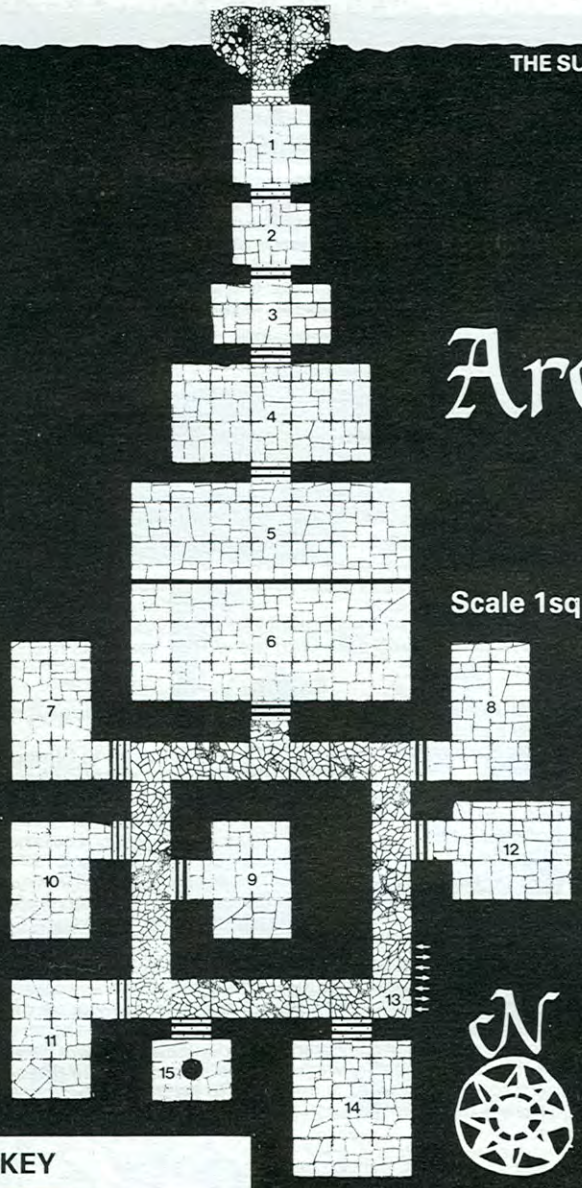
I. True Repository.
This is the true repository of the Sunfire's Heart. All doors are metal except for the front one, and none are locked. The whole complex is lit by *continual light* spells.

Key to Repository (Map 11)

1. Entrance Chamber. The entrance to this room cannot be opened until Jovian's spell (see section H) has removed the rock plug. The room is empty except for the inscription on the west wall:

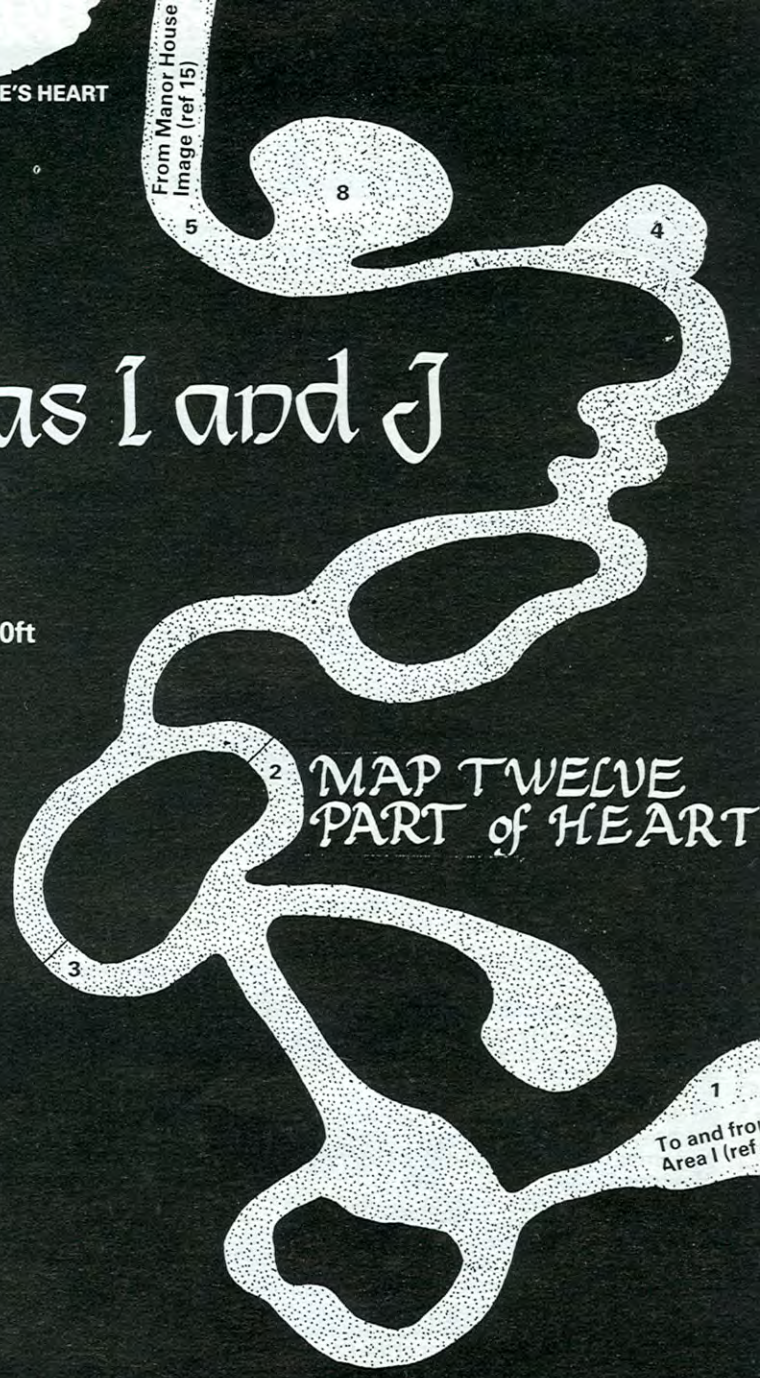
REPOSITORY
BUILT BY THE EARTHFRIENDS
YEAR 1500 OF THE EMPIRE
AND SEALED
IN THE YEAR 1670 BY JOVIAN STERNMOLE

Areas I and J



KEY
Metal door
Magical rock plug
Pit

MAP ELEVEN
REPOSITORY
of HEART



MAP TWELVE
PART of HEART

2. On the floor is a skeleton in chain-mail, with a military pick. His skull has been trepanned, and there are strange magical symbols scratched into it. This was a zombie-like creature, similar to that in room 3, but in this case something went wrong.

3. In the middle of this room is a 6' tall lump of impervious crystal. One round after the party enters the room, the crystal will disappear,and a man in chain-mail will emerge and attack at once. He functions rather like a zombie [*MM*] but being a product of the alchemical and magical experiments of the Earthfriends, cannot be turned. Zombie: AC5; HD2; HTK10; Move: 6"; Damage: 2-7.) His skull has been tampered with like that of the skeleton in room 2.

4. This contains 10 crystals, each with a 'zombie' functioning exactly like that in room 3. (HTK10; 12; 13; 9; 11; 12; 16; 15; 12; 8.)

5. There is no *continual light* spell here. The south wall of this room is made of specially preserved wood. Two rounds after the party enters, the ogres held in suspension in room 6 will crash through the wall, achieving automatic surprise.

6. Two ogres (*MM*: AC5; HD4+1; HTK20, 20; Move: 6"; Damage: 1-10) are held in crystal suspension here. Like the men in the previous rooms they function rather like zombies, with the same invulnerabilities, but are not in any way unholy. They will not animate unless someone enters 5.

7. Dormitory. This room is not lit. There are bunk-beds for 20 people, each with a neatly folded up blanket and a pillow.

8. As 7.

9. Recreation Area. It contains 12 easy-chairs and a low table.

10. Records Room. It contains two tables, each with a chair, ink bottle and quill, and 5 metal cabinets for documents. The cabinets are full of the remains of Earthfriend records which Jovian deliberately burnt to prevent them from falling into the the wrong hands.

11. Library. It is particularly well-stocked. Jovian did not consider the contents sensitive enough to burn. The books (about 2,000) are all leather bound and arranged roughly by subject; typically history, religion, beast lore etc. The party would certainly find plenty of 'monster manual' type information here, but most importantly, a clear and full account of the Aurassic Islands' history, with some description of the Heart (although the books will stop well short of saying the Heart is actually on the island), and of Asustren. Careful reading will discover her true name, Elishauf.

12. Kitchen. There is a stone stove still in place.

13. Psionics and spell-casters passing along this stretch of corridor will hear a 'hissing' in their ears. Touching the east wall will reveal that hands can pass through. Those who step through will find themselves in section J, a link in a parallel plane between the Heart and its original resting place.

14. The door to this room bears the words 'Cutting Room'. Inside are 4 stone slabs 6' long, 2' wide and 4' high. There is one cupboard of surgical instruments, one of various potions and fluids (about 50, all of which have lost their potency) labelled with ancient runes, and one containing receptacles with human brains in preservative.

There is a book on a lectern at the far end, which Jovian overlooked. It describes the rather disturbing later experiments of the Earthfriends. A group of high level magic-users and alchemists might be able to understand it. The book is entitled 'Principles of the gentle Arts of Life Restructuring, Brain Surgery and Life Suspension Variously Explained.'

15. On the door to this room is 'A great Power lies behind this door'. In the room there is a 2' diameter pit with a manhole cover over the top. The pit is 100' deep, but a metal-runged ladder runs all the way down. At the bottom is a pedestal with a depression obviously intended to take some object now absent. There is no 'hissing' to be

heard. The Heart was once here when in its stable form and watcned over by the Earthfriends – it has moved on since!

J. Parallel Plane Link (Map 12)
This is a link, on a parallel plane, between the Heart and its original resting place in the form of a small maze of crazy tunnels created as the Heart's presence left the repository, accessible only from the Manor House's Image, or area. The tunnels themselves are 10' wide and circular, but flattened at the bottom. The walls are soft, but cannot be pierced, burnt or otherwise destroyed, and suggest the inside of a brain. They radiate light which slowly pulsates in time to a constant 'heart beat' noise. Psionics and spell casters will also hear hissing in their ears.

Key to Parallel Plane
1. Passing through the wall here returns to the corridor at Area I, reference 13.
2. There is a silver membrane that reflects like a mirror stretched right across the corridor here. As it is approached, from either side, a number of figures equal to the number of the party will step out from the mirror and attack immediately. They will be the doubles of the members of the party, and dressed and equipped identically, but these simulacra will always have an effective armour class of 10 and two hit dice, with no intelligence (mind influencing spells will *not* work).
3. As 2, only the figures appearing will be those of old slain enemies of the party.
4. Here there is a sheet of impervious clear crystal set into the wall. Behind it are more simulacra of the party, all playing (silently) musical instruments, as it seems, slowed by one third.
5. On the floor grow many small gold-coloured ferns. Those who step into here can see myriads of stars and planets, and the whole infinity of the cosmos. Characters with less than 11 wisdom will fall unconscious immediately (saving throw applicable) and have to be dragged out. Thereafter, they will speak in sonorous, awe-struck voices for a while.
6. This looks into the room described in the Manor House Image, 15. However, if characters try to step through into the room, they will end up *teleported* to a random location on Rammas (DM's whim).

K. Old Watchtower.
One room, 15' x 15' x 10' high. In here the 15 blue xvarts are living. This particular bunch of xvarts are CN in alignment, unarmed and peaceful. They will be reasonably friendly to those who appear non-hostile, but will be too scared to say anthing about the red xvarts and their deeds. Some of the xvarts have violins and other instruments and they spent the time playing melancholy xvartish folk-tunes.

L. Axe Beaks.
At this point the party will encounter 2 axe beaks (AC6; HD3; HTK12, 15; Move: 18"; Damage: 1-3, 1-3, 2-8) – wandering guardians of the Earthfriends, now reduced to wandering over Rammas.

M. Stone Bridge.
Of solid construction, built by the Earthfriends. The waters beneath are troubled and turbulent.

N. The Purpure Mine.
Entrance to the purpure mine. Five red xvarts (*FF*: AC7; HD1-1; HTK4, 7, 5, 3, 1; damage by short sword) in red armour are besieging the entrance with a view to taking the mine over. The 10 yellow xvarts (in yellow tunics) barricaded inside the mine are determined to repel them, but are no fighters. The leader of the CN xvartish miners is named Viktor. He will be delighted if the red xvarts are driven off by the party and will give them a purple key with 'Jovian' engraved on the barrel, which he found lying around somewhere. (This unlocks the door in the crypt of the church of Hesnog.) Viktor has no information to offer, though he believes that both the Dark Leopard and Lord Silver have been murdered by the red xvarts.

O. Church of Hesnog.
This is a long, low, whitewashed building tended by a priest with no name and no clerical ability. Hesnog is the brother of Asustren, but one of the most truly neutral beings in existence – he is called 'the indifferent'. His full nature is unknown. Followers of Asustren will not put a foot near the church.

Key to Church (Map 13)
1. Cell. The nameless priest of Hesnog (AC10; HTK1; LVL0; AL N) lives here. He will be as helpful as he is able, but knows nothing of the contents of the crypt.
2. At this end of the church is a 2' diameter, 2" thick lead disc, said by the priest to represent both Hesnog and 'the Far Side of the Moon'. It rests on a stone stand. Before the disc stands a metal tripod in which to burn incense. It contains some sticks of this.

3. Crypt. A trapdoor leads to the crypt. In here Jovian Sturlasson left his clues as to the whereabouts of the *Sunfire's Heart*.
The crypt contains the tombs of the Emperor Stalvar V and his wife, carved of black volcanic rock. A large piece of rock crystal lies on the tomb of Stalvar. A door of purple metal 10' high and 4' wide, with no hinge or lock is in the east wall. There is a tripod in the middle of the room for incense. If incense is burnt in the tripod, the first door slides aside to reveal door number 2.
A spectrum of light now shines from the lintel of the door to the floor. If a rock crystal is interposed, forming a white beam, the door slides aside to reveal door number 3. This has 4 locks in it, arranged in a square. The locks must be opened in the sequence 'bottom left – top right – top left – bottom right' either with the key furnished by Viktor or by picking them. If a wrong lock is opened, or a thief fails his Open Locks roll, all locks automatically relock, and a cloud of purplish gas will spray out (*every* time). The gas fills the entire room, and a save versus poison is necessary, or take one of the following (d8). 1: skin stained blue for 3 months; 2: 1-2HPs damage; 3: 1-6HPs damage; 4: 2-16HPs damage; 5: sleep 1-4 days; 6: blindness, 1-3 days; 7: laughing gas; 8: retching and choking. When all locks are safely open, the door slides to one side.
Inside is a large metal chest, unlocked by Jovian's key. Inside is a smaller chest and a scroll case with the words 'read this first'. The scroll reads:

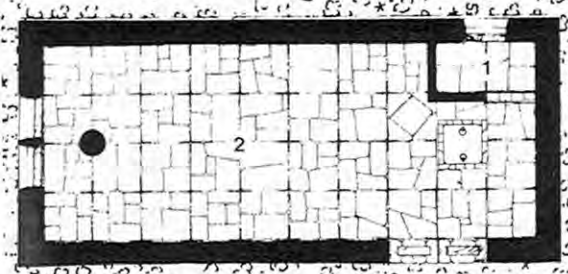
My name is Jovian Sturlasson.
If you serve E or A, curse you.
I am the last Earthfriend.
I guard it.
I cannot face it – it is too strong – there is no-one to help.
It is out of control.
It is not kept here.
The first scroll will show you where it is.
Read it by my pillar.
The second summons it to a stable form.
You must have the Strength.
Read the scroll only where it is.
If the servants of her are near, you must do this and carry it away.
Take it to a place of safety.
Do not let Her have it.
The third claims if for yourself.
Do not claim it – it is chaos.
(It is the Heart. Her means Elishauf.)

Inside the smaller chest are 3 more scroll cases numbered one, two and three. Reading these scrolls aloud does not destroy the writing on them. The followers of Asustren do not possess knowledge of the spells contained in these scrolls and would certainly make strenuous efforts to capture them, if they were to find out about them. Left to himself, Almeris could probably work out spells to duplicate their effects in about six months. Scroll 1 is intended to be read at the location at area H. There is no effect if read in the wrong place. The words on the scroll are:

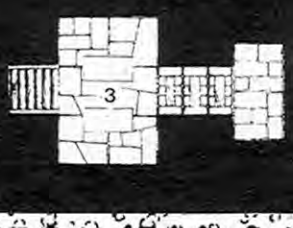
Up flames and burn the cloak away,
Magic be true, and work nowise awry.

Scroll 2 will bring the unstable *Heart* back to normal. It must be read in a place where the presence of the *Heart* is very strong, otherwise the reader and his companions will find themselves plucked up and deposited in some faraway and inhospitable place. (The DM should dissuade the players from falling into the trap, obviously.) In effect, the scroll should be read out by or in one of the things described in areas B, D or J. If this is done, the house and tunnels detailed in B and J will disappear and their contents scattered to the four winds and all illusions etc created by the *Heart* will cease. The house (B) will now become safe. The readers, together with the Dark Leopard and any other characters inside the manifestations of the *Heart* at the time, will be rudely deposited at area F with the *Heart* – a glowing orb of fire – in the middle. The reader loses all hit points except one (they can, of course, be regained) and will be unable to use spells for a week. What the players do with the *Heart* is up to them. The Dark Leopard would want to return to Basil Port in order to explain himself. The actual words on this scroll are 'Carlbar mikel kethvik gunom bonsh duf'.
Scroll 3 will only work in the presence of the stable *Heart*. When it is read out, the *Heart* immediately fuses with the reader's head. It reads 'I claim this *Heart* unto myself'.
P. Xvarts. A large circular cave, 50' in diameter, where live 30 Chaotic Evil red xvarts [*FF*] with their food supplies. They have 3,000cp and the ingots they took from the strongroom at the manor house (500gp worth) betweeen them.□

Scale 1sq = 10ft



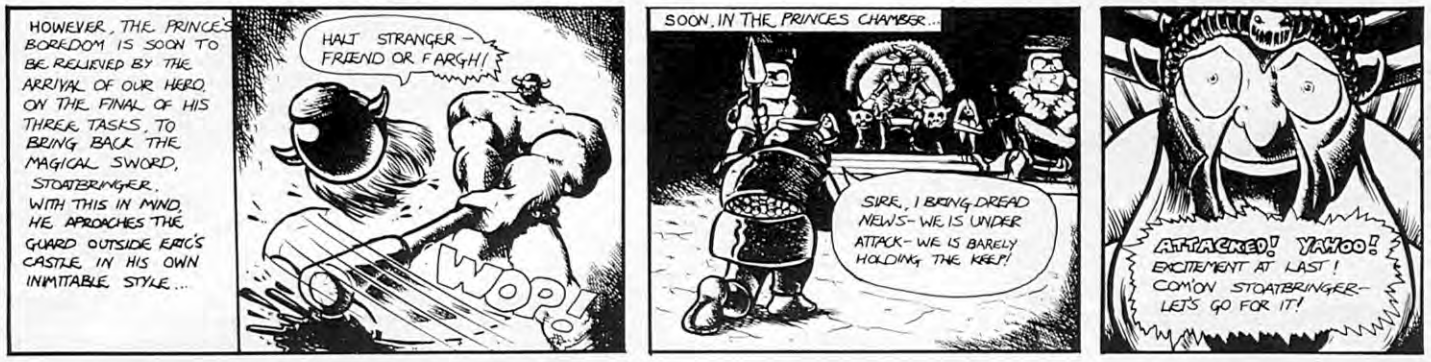
Area O
MAP THIRTEEN
CHURCH of HESNOG

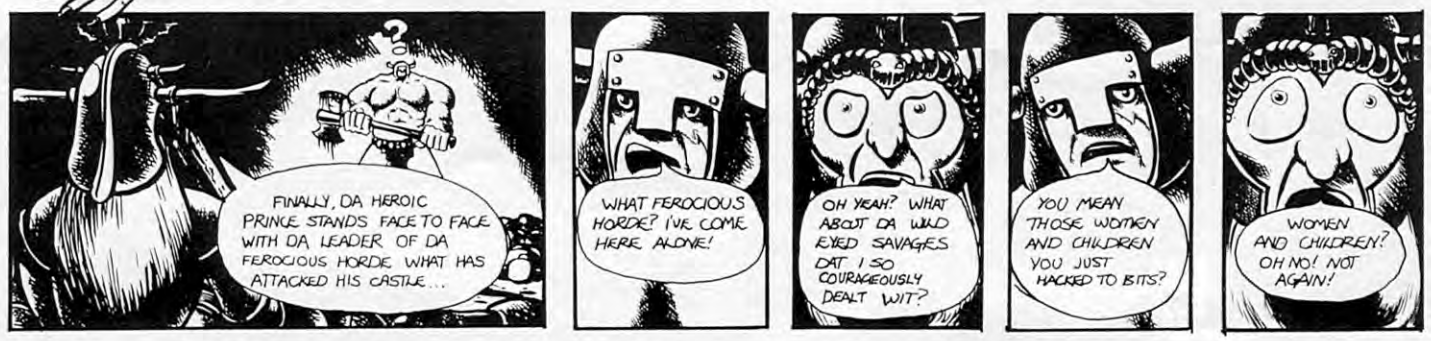


THRUD THE BARBARIAN

The Three Tasks of Thrud

Chapter 6: The Third Task





Starbase is a bi-monthly department devoted to Traveller, *edited by Bob McWilliams.*

THE STAURNI

An Alien Race for Traveller by Andy Slack

Home World
The Staurni homeworld is Staurn, and they are rarely encountered away from it.

Staurn's UPP is AFB7870-C. It is a sub-Jovian world orbiting an F5 star quite closely, with two moons. Surface gravity is just under 2.0 G, and the world rotates in about 18 standard hours. From space, the blue-grey atmosphere with its blue-tinted clouds partially conceals a world with royal blue seas and ochre and cinnabar continents, with many volcanoes and areas of hot springs. Vegetation is predominantly reddish-yellow.

The planet's atmosphere is a mixture of hydrogen, helium, nitrogen, ammonia and methane at a pressure of three standard atmospheres. (NB: Oxygen burns and explodes readily in this atmosphere!) Because of the high energy input from the primary, winds and storms are especially fierce – no-one ventures out in a Staurnian storm. Surface water is heavily contaminated with ammonia. Animal life is common, and of standard types. The world can be placed in any system as a secondary world, in place of one of the nearer gas giants; the system should be politically independent.

Appearance and Attitudes
The Staurni are approximately 3 metres long, half of this is a rudder-tipped tail. They have two arms with taloned hands, but no legs; they rest sitting on their coiled tails. A prominent keelbone and batlike wings with a 7 metre span allow the Staurni to fly. The head has a narrow skull with a protruding fanged muzzle and small rounded ears at the sides. The nostrils are hidden under the chin. The whole body is covered in a greyish growth that is similar to a cross between fur and feathers; a darker band of this surrounds the eyes. Clothing is limited to pouched bandoliers.

The Staurni are carnivores. They demand respect and must be addressed in an elaborate and polite manner in their own language. They will respect a character who meets them on their own ground, in the high pressure and gravity, rather than talking over a communicator. They are aggressive and warlike in behaviour. They are not gregarious and prefer to hunt for food. On reaching middle age, a Staurni loses both sex drive and aggression, and becomes content to stay at home. The elders are respected for their experience and wisdom.

Evolution
The Staurni evolved from 200kg flying carnivore/chasers. Intelligence was developed to fight off a larger but related species which invaded their hunting grounds eons ago.

History
Technology was slow in coming to the Staurni – before they discovered atomic energy, the only way to smelt metal was in one of the numerous volcanic vents. Eventually, a planet-wide industrial society was formed, composed of confederations of clans expanding by conquest and slavery. A nuclear war followed, lasting quite some time; afterwards Staurni society attained its present form, over a century ago.

The Society
The Staurni social structure is based on a patriarchal male and his extended family, including his wives, cubs and relatives as well as retainers and their immediate relations. Staurni marriage is exceedingly complex both ritually and structurally. Each clan is independent and heavily armed, usually with atomic weapons; its home will be a complex of under ground, nuclear-proof bunkers and fused stone towers in a mountainous region. These are called Aeries, perches, nests or some such term, and are identified by the name of their patriarch.

A quasi-religious organisation called the Lodge exists to settle disputes between clans and deal with off-worlders. Its leaders are old males, and most work is done by acolytes – usually younger sons of patriarchs, with little hope of inheritance, who join the organisation for the adventure, the concubines, and the chance of promotion and power.

Technology
The Staurni know of Jump drive, but do not use it. Their only spacecraft are system defence vesels. They make truly excellent weapons, often deliberately for trade with off-worlders. They are a common source of advanced naval and personal weaponry, especially kinds which are illegal in most other systems. Their transport technology is very limited, since they can fly themselves.

In Play
It is not recommended that Staurni be used as player characters because they loathe to leave Staurn, and in any case their life-support requirements are most abnormal. For non-players, the referee should give Staurni a DM of +3 when diceing for Strength and Endurance. Aging is at normal rates. Staurni may not fly except in the proper atmosphere – it must have the right composition and pressure. Staurni may acquire any skill or benefit, but their Strength and Endurance may not exceed 15 at any time. An unarmed Staurni (a rare thing) is considered equipped with claws and teeth, and may use either (but not both) in any combat round.

The planet Staurn is useful as a source of non-standard weapons, especially for starships. A referee might invent his own weapons for the Staurni to sell, or might rule that *Book 4* and *5* weapons are illegal and may only be obtained from Staurn, and so on. In any case, players are likely to go there to tool up. Characters who have certain skills will know the following.

Those with Medical skill will know that a human being will require one dose of Medical Drug per day while on Staurn to counteract the effects of the high gravity. If this is not available, after two or three days a character will be too ill and exhausted to move or perform any actions. A character not using the proper drugs who is exposed to Staurn's gravity will take 2d6 wounds per day. In addition, a medic and those with Hunting skill will know that the water, air and animal life on Staurn are all poisonous.

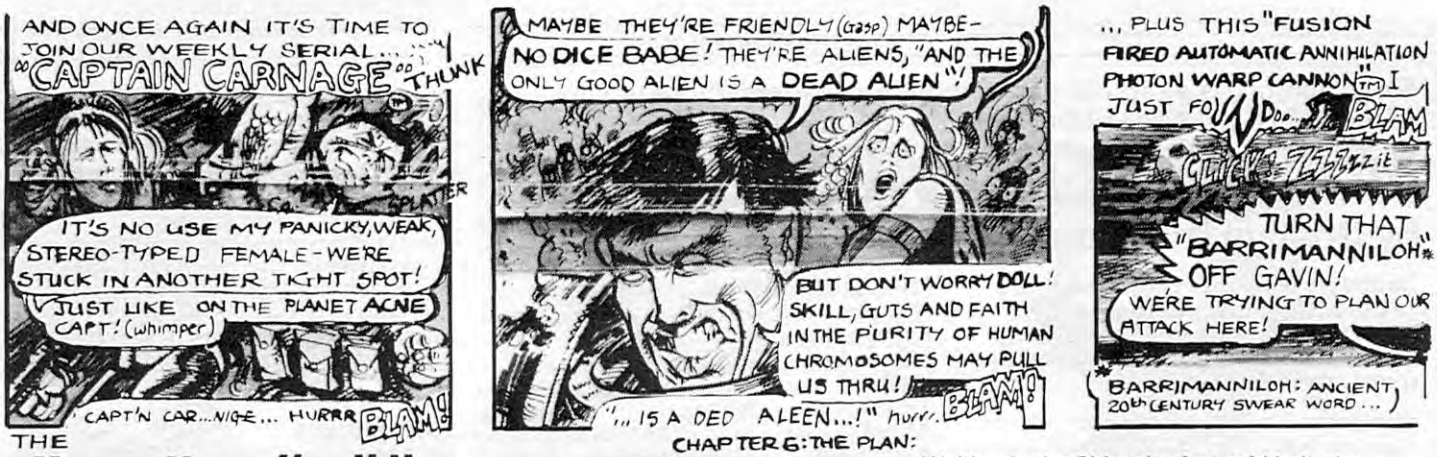
Those with Survival skill (or Scout prior service if *Book 4* is not in use) will know that while the water on Staurn is polluted with ammonia, it is possible to obtain drinkable water by firing a low-intensity, wide beam laser pulse from a hand weapon (using one charge) at a metal canteen of local water; the ammonia is then boiled out over a period of minutes.

If the band travel on the surface of Staurn, there are two kinds of special events which may be encountered.

Walking Forests. A large corpse of trees, each 4 metres high, is encountered near dawn. As the sun heats them, the trees begin to 'walk' inexorably across the band's path. The trees move in this fashion in search of new soil, since they quickly exhaust the nutrients where they stand. When the sun goes down again, they will stop moving. A character caught in such a forest while it is on the move must make a Strength saving throw or be trampled underfoot, taking 2d6 wounds per combat round and almost certainly having his suit torn. One attempt to escape per round is allowed.

Slaughter Machines. In their nuclear war, the Staurni protected industrial centres with robot tanks, programmed to patrol an area and kill anything that moves in it. After the war, some clans left the surviving robots in place as a free defence of their nests. Heavy weapons will be useless due to age; the robot tank encountered by the party will attack with weapons equivalent to auto-rifles and laser rifles, several of each. The auto-rifles are harmless since the explosives in their bullets have decayed; but the lasers are still operational.

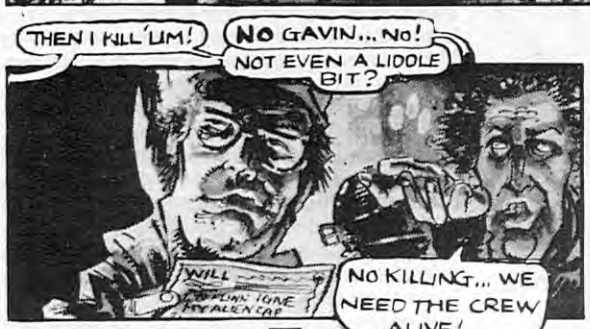
Staurn and the Staurni are taken from *The Star Fox* by Poul Andersen.



THE TRAVELLERS

CHAPTER 6: THE PLAN:

Waiting in the **Shionthy Asteroid belt**, the travellers plan the capture of a cargo shuttle en route from **Moughas** to **Pscias**. There, something too terrible to go into detail about awaits them...



Gavin's so called mind drifts onto happier days... the days of **barbarians**!

If you're the sort of person that enjoys wanton destruction and slaughter...

... the sort of person that cheered the **Ring Wraiths** and booed the **Ewoks**... there'll be more of the same in the near future...

"INDY" HARRISON 13th JULY '89 ©

The **Osprey** ends its **Silent Running** mode and swoops in for the kill...

... While one member of the crew regards the plan with...

... slight scepticism.

NEXT: ATTACK!

Fiend Factory *is a regular department for readers' monsters for* AD&D/D&D, *edited by Albie Fiore.*

MAJIPOOR MONSTERS

by Graham Drysdale

Doubtless the books Lord Valentine's Castle *and* Majipoor Chronicles *by Robert Silverberg are known to many. Here is an adaption of the creatures and races detailed within them.*

SEA DRAGON

No Appearing: 10-60
Armour Class: See below
Movement: 18"
Hit Dice: See below
Treasure: Non
Attack: See below
Alignment: N
Intelligence: Animal to Low

The majipoorian sea dragon is a huge creature which can reach lengths of up to 300 feet. The sea dragon is a mammal. Although its young develop in eggs, the eggs hatch inside the mother and the young are consequently born alive.

Sea dragons appear much like standard dragons, having humps along their spines, long thick necks, heavy triangular heads, and small leathery wings, which are used as fins and help them to swim. Dragons are hunted as all of their body parts can be sold for various uses. Those parts especially valued are the unhatched dragon eggs, useful for medicinal means, and dragon milk, which is an expensive luxury. Dragon bones, which are as strong as steel, may be used for building with.

Due to the varying size of dragons, their hit points, armour class and attack strength will differ accordingly. The table below shows such variations:

Length (ft)	6-10	11-40	41-100	101-150	151-200	201-300	301+
AC	10	9	8	7	6	5	4
HD	2	5	8	11	15	22	26
Attack	2-8	3-18	3-24	3-30	4-40	5-50	6-60

Sea dragons only attack once per round and have no lair but dwell in the open sea, migrating to warmer climes. They steer away from boats unless they are attacked, which they may ram. A sea dragon ramming does (HD/2) points of hull damage. Sea dragons communicate ultrasonically (much like whales do).

FOREST-BRETHREN

No Appearing: 10-100
Armour Class: 8
Movement: 12"
Hit Dice: 1
Treasure: None
Attack: 1-2/1-2; see below.
Alignment: Chaotic Neutral
Intelligence: Low

The forest-brethren are small ape-like beings with pale, smooth, blue-grey skin and thin, wiry limbs. Their hairless heads are narrow and long with sloping, flat foreheads, supported by fragile necks, long and thin. Their chests are shallow and bony, and their framework is slight without any spare flesh. They are cunning and instinctively clever, although their intellectual rating is quite low, on a par with monkeys and apes. They live in dense forests and woodlands.

Forest-brethren hunt and move about

in large groups of 10-100. They make use of a thick, red vine, known as Birdnet vine, which is so sticky that it will bond with extreme strength to anything it touches (including flesh). The vine may only be burnt free. The forest-brethren are immune to the glue-like quality of the vine because their skin contains an enzyme which neutralises it. Thus they are quite able to work and weave the vine to produce effective nets or, if it is strung between trees, blockades.

They worship huge, red barked trees, known as Dwikkas. The tree trunks are covered in deep, wide fissures, up to about a foot in length. Though not particularly tall, the width of the trees is immense, their great branches spreading out for a few hundred feet or so. From these branches sprout great leathery black leaves that cast dark, foreboding shadows. Also suspended from these limbs are the great dwikka fruit, yellowish and spherically shaped, about ten feet in diameter. The Fruit of Life; without them no forest-brethren would exist.

Forest-brethren usually attack by ambushing. They use bamboo blowpipes, the darts being coated with a toxic poison which kills in ten seconds (save or die, save results in 1-3hp of damage). They can fire two darts per round. In melee they attack with their hands (though they rarely venture into melee) doing 1-2/1-2 hit points of damage.

The brethren have no use for money or valuables. Persons passing through their territory must pay by other means to gain access. This must either be some service or something edible. Forest-brethren speak only their own tongue. They live for forty years or so.

METAMORPH

No Appearing: 3-18
Armour Class: 5
Movement: 12"
Hit Dice: 2+1
Treasure: Individuals K, L, M, N, Q. A and G in lair.
Attack: 1-8
Alignment: Chaotic Neutral
Intelligence: Exceptional

Metamorphs are a race of shapeshifters, beings able to transform the shape of their body by exerting muscular pressure on their mobile and non-fixed bone structure. This enables them to mimic other forms extremely accurately, enhanced further by the ability of their body cells to change in hue and texture.

In their natural form metamorphs are slim and angular in build. Their skin is an unhealthy pale greenish colour, and their faces show sharp cheekbones, lipless mouths and barely existant noses. Their eyes are without pupils and slant inwards at an angle towards the centre of their face. On the whole, they appear as frail, fragile and shy creatures, but with some concealed latent power.

Metamorphs shun other company other than their own. Sometimes they will have cause to penetrate human society where they are likely to pose as another race. When they travel in natural form they are mostly treated with contempt due to their uncanny nature.

Metamorphs are not a warlike race and travel abroad only in small groups. They rarely employ weapons and will fight only as a last resort. They do, however, have strange psionic powers. Each metamorph has a psionic strength of 101-200 and 2-5 attack and defence modes. Their disciplines are *Clairvoyance, Clairaudience* and *Telepathy*. They speak their own language, their alignment language, and the common tongue. They live for hundreds of years.

SKANDAR

No Appearing:	2-20
Armour Class:	5
Movement:	9"
Hit Dice:	4
Treasure:	Individuals K, L, M. B in lair.
Attack:	2-8/2-8/2-8/2-8
Alignment:	Neutral
Intelligence:	Average

Skandars come from the frigid north where their thick hide and coarse grey hair protects them from the harsh conditions. They stand on average, about seven feet tall, being heavy jawed and having narrow, yellow eyes. They have two extra arms, placed below their outer arms and more towards the centre of the chest. These massive extremities enable them to attack four times per round, each arm doing 2-8 points of damage. Sometimes they bear weapons, like swords, battle axes and heavy crossbows, and in this case their strength is considered to be 18/00 for to-hit and damage purposes. However, they cannot use more than two weapons at a time.

Although slow and clumsy in their movement, Skandars have amazing hand-eye co-ordination. Thus, when using this ability, their dexterity is taken to be equal to an 18 score (+3 with bows). For other considerations, their dexterity gives no bonuses.

Skandars have a hot fiery temperament and are quick to anger, although they make their living mostly through trade and not warfare. They are considered tolerable by most humans and demi-humans. They tend to keep themselves to themselves, sometimes seeming rather grumpy and sour to other races, but are generally peaceful.

Skandars speak the common tongue and alignment tongues only, having no racial language of their own. They live up to about 90 years.

VROON

No Appearing:	1-12 in rare tribes.
Armour Class:	10
Movement:	9"
Hit Dice:	1-1
Treasure:	Individuals K, M. E in lair.
Attack:	1-3
Alignment:	Chaotic Good
Intelligence:	Very to Genius

Vroons are tiny creatures, a little over 2 feet tall and have greenish tinted skin that tends to fade with age. They have tentacular limbs, rubbery but strong, and large eyes of golden yellow. They live mostly among humans; few tribes of vroons exist. They rarely fight, being fragile and somewhat easily harmed. They do, however, have a natural understanding of sorcery (both magic-user and illusionist), and about 75% of those encountered will have some knowledge of the subject, if only a smattering. 30% of those spells known will be illusionist and 70% will be magic-user. Those vroons of 17 Intelligence or below are limited to the 9th level of experience; those few with an 18 Intelligence are unlimited in their advancement. They often serve as guides, advisers or protectors of the rich or majestic.

Vroons are cunning and mischevious, but not malignantly so. They are interesting and pleasant to converse with, though any hostilities will frighten them. They use their wavering tentacles to cast spells and those above third level will have mastered the ability to *remove fear* and 'calm anger' with a mere touch (no save). They make use of many of the spells that charm and enchant. They love water, are good swimmers and prefer

temperate, warm climates.

Vroons speak common, vroonish and their alignment tongue. They live for up to 180 years.

HJORT

No Appearing:	2-20
Armour Class:	10
Movement:	9"
Hit Dice:	1
Treasure:	Individuals J, K, L. B in lair.
Attack:	1-6 or by weapon
Alignment:	Neutral
Intelligence:	Average

Hjorts are insipid creatures of medium height. They are thick bodied with puffy, warty textured skin and bulging frog-like eyes. Their skin is an ashen-grey colour, often speckled with colours of either orange or green pigment. Other races find them quite obnoxious.

Hjorts tolerate human company and may often be seen in market places, trading their various goods. Most seem to be merchants or traders, though any hjort wishing to adventure may rise to 4th level as a fighter. For any hjort tribe,

there will always be a fighter of level 1-4.

Hjorts speak hjortish, common and their alignment tongue.

GHAYROG

No Appearing:	2-20
Armour Class:	8
Movement:	12"
Hit Dice:	1+1
Treasure:	Individuals J, K, L. B in lair.
Attack:	1-6
Alignment:	Neutral
Intelligence:	High

Ghayrogs are reptilian, although warm blooded, with smooth, shiny scales covering their bodies. Their eyes are green and unblinking and their hair is a mass of black curls, which weave and writhe monotonously of their own accord. Their tongues are serpent like, forked and flickering. They sleep for only one season each year, remaining awake for the rest of the time.

Ghayrogs usually live in small colonies and 50% of these will be female with 2-12 young each. They are egg layers and will incubate their young for 2 months before they hatch.

Ghayrogs are a timid race, though intelligent, and live mostly where it is warm and damp, favouring sub-tropical regions. They will congregate quite happily with humans, despite their reptilian appearance, but are peace loving and not particularly adept at fighting. They speak the common and their alignment tongue, having no racial one of their own. They live for about 60 years.□

Tabletop Heroes *is a regular department for figure reviews and tips, written by Gary Chalk and Joe Dever.*

RACY BASES

How to Improve the Standing of your Figures

Of all the requests for help and advice that we have received, one question is by far the most repeatedly asked: 'What simple improvement can I make to better the appearance of my painted miniatures?' In nine out of ten replies, our answer is quite simply 'Better basing!'

The colour of a figure's base is more of an important factor in the final appearance than one might think, and deserves special attention; many well-painted figures are spoiled by dull or over-dark bases. We've included a step-by-step guide to better basing, which we have found to be a cheap, resilient and attractive method of improving one's figure collection.

Fig 1: Shows Lothar Von Horngrim, leader of 'Horngrim's Mercenary Maulers' and one of *Citadel's* latest additions to their CO1 range of fighters. The base of this figure was constructed as detailed below, with the addition of a small stone and a clump of 'grass'. 'Landscaping' a base in this manner is especially effective when painting a regiment of identical figures.

Fig 2: 'Grom's Goblin Guard', one of the new 'Regiments of Renown' sets from *Citadel*. Designed to complement the *Forces of Fantasy* armies, each boxed set comes with nine identical troopers and one special command model: either a leader, musician or standard bearer. This is designed to allow the assembly of a small unit with one command model or a whole regiment with all three. It is the 'uniformity' of this set that is the only disappointment, for it would have greatly benefited from *Citadel's* usual policy of casting a basic torso with an assortment of differing head and weapons.

Fig 3: In *WD55*, we featured standards – specifically those made from paper, but Fig 3 shows one that has been constructed from that old modelling standby: the toothpaste tube. The advantage of this material is that it can be moulded to simulate a very creased or tattered banner. Simply flatten out the tube (no, not while its still full!) and cut it to the desired shape. Use super-glue or an equivalent adhesive to fix it to the flag pole, prior to painting. Much of the fine detail was added to the design using a rapidograph pen (although this technique is much easier to apply to paper flags that can be laid out flat, and then creased to simulate a billowing banner). Avoid creasing a metal flag after painting, for you will find that your carefully applied design will begin to flake and crumble.

Fig 4: A beautifully detailed 25mm Ale House Bar, from a newcomer to the world of miniatures – *Limited Edition Castings*. We were sent this pre-production model (which should be available by the time you read this) and advised that some of the smaller details such as the silver lamps, may be altered prior to general release. The kit comes complete with a paved base incorporating a trapdoor behind the bar counter, smaller accessories such as the wine cask and loaf of bread, plus an additional tavern table with plates of food (not illustrated). This excellent model is very versatile, and could be used as a set-place in any fantasy tavern, wild-west saloon, thirties bar, or with a few pseudo-tech additions, even a Sci-Fi canteen.

The Giant Landragon shown in *Fig 5* is one of the excellent models from the *Asgard* 'Creatures of Chaos' range, and retails for £5.00. It's designer, the talented Nick Bibby, is currently working on a new range of figures for *Citadel*, and we hope to be able to preview his 'Great Spined Dragon' very soon. The skulls and bones that bedeck the base can be obtained by dissecting some of the many skeleton warriors currently available. It seems that skeletons and orcs are two of the most commonly found creatures in any UK fantasy catalogue.

Useful Addresses

Limited Edition Castings, 38 Mill Farm Close, Hounslow, Middx.
Citadel Miniatures (new address), Chewton St, Hilltop, Eastwood, Notts.

BASING YOUR FIGURES

1. After having painted and varnished your miniature, make sure that the underside of the base is free of any excess metal. Remove any flash with a file or modelling knife to get a level base so that the figure stands upright.

2. Glue the miniature to its base using a contact adhesive (eg *UHU, Bostik, Evostik* etc). For figures that you intend to use solely for role-playing, then metal washers or small coins such as ½p's or 1p's make ideal bases. Figures that are destined for a fantasy wargames table are best mounted on stiff card. If the figure is one of several that make up an army unit, mount some of them in multiples of two and three, to help speed up play.

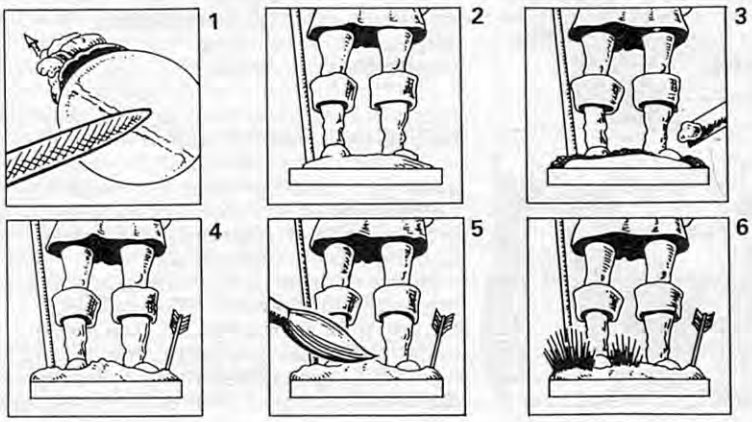
3. Using a small spatula (this can be fashioned from plasticard or the handle of an old paintbrush), cover the base in a ready-mixed filler. Tetrion is particularly good for this purpose as it sets rock-hard and can withstand an accidental drop without shattering. The position of the feet are important and when a figure is based correctly the boots must be on the surface if it is hard, or in it if you depict the base as soft. If you wish to depict a hard base, leave the surface of the filler rough and irregular.

4: While the filler is still wet, small objects can be embedded in it to give the figure some individuality. Arrows, severed heads and broken weapons are particularly effective, and for larger bases try adding a damaged shield or a small treasure chest or box.

5: When the filler has thoroughly set, the base can be painted. It is at this stage that the most striking improvement to the overall appearance of your figure can be made, for it is a fact that the brighter the colour of the base, the more colourful the figure appears. Try using *Humbrol* 'Green Leather' (MC20) or *Tamiya* 'Flat Green' (XF-5) as a base colour, and then dry-brush this with bright yellow (*Humbrol* 'Yellow Facings' or *Tamiya* 'Flat Yellow' [XF-3]). It sounds ghastly, but it gives an excellent result that will enhance any figure. Dungeon-delvers may prefer something a little more subterranean, in which case try a base coat of dark grey (*Humbrol* Matt 66) dry-brushed with white; it may be more appropriate, but you will notice that the figure will seem dull in comparison to those with a green/yellow finish.

6: When the paint has dried, small stones and clumps of imitation grass may be glued in place using a clear contact adhesive. The imitation grass can be achieved by dying sisal string (that 'hairy' stuff used to tie parcels) with a green cold water dye. Cut the string up into one foot lengths and leave them in a diluted solution to soak. The longer you leave the string in the dye, the greener it will become. Therefore, by removing strands at different stages, a variety of shades can be obtained.

A quick and very tempting method of finishing a based figure is to coat the base with a PVA glue, and then sprinkle this with coloured flock – a dyed sawdust commonly used for railway scenic layouts. In the past, we have both tried this method, but in the light of experience we do not recommend it as a suitable alternative to the method detailed above. Regardless of the shade of flock used, the colour will eventually fade (especially if left in direct sunlight) leaving an unattractive pale olive or fawn coloured mess in its wake.□



Illustrations showing hints and tips on basing your figures, referring to the numbered text, above.

Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3

Fig 4

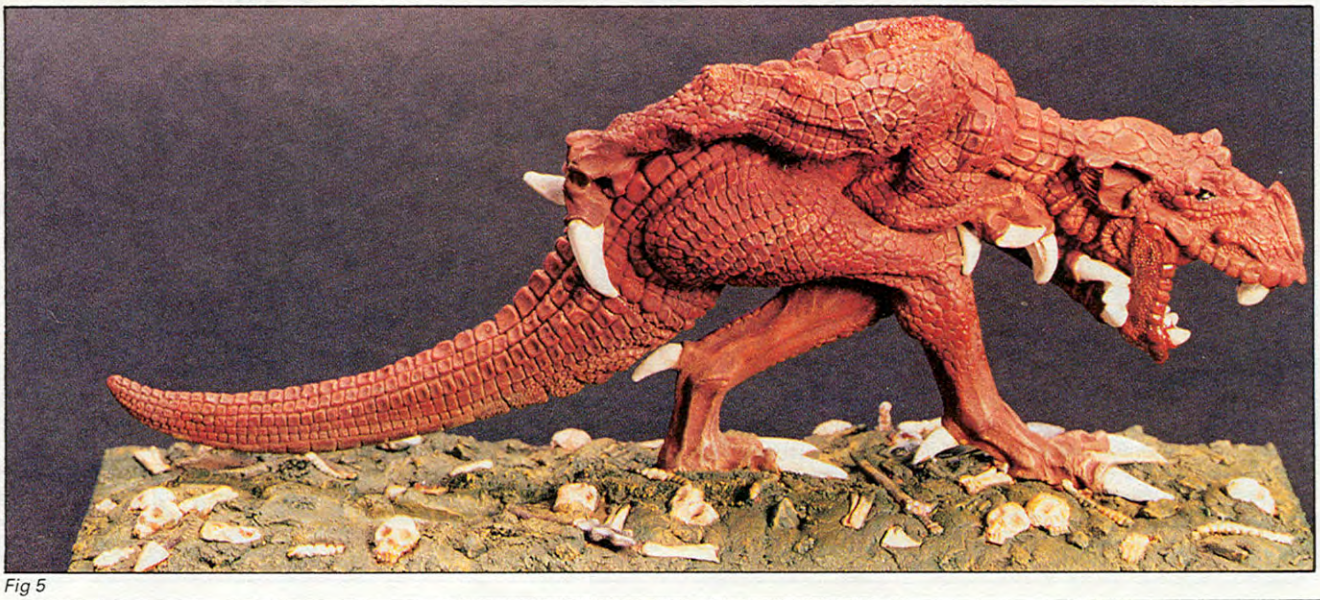


Fig 5

Photographs by Gary Chalk and Joe Dever

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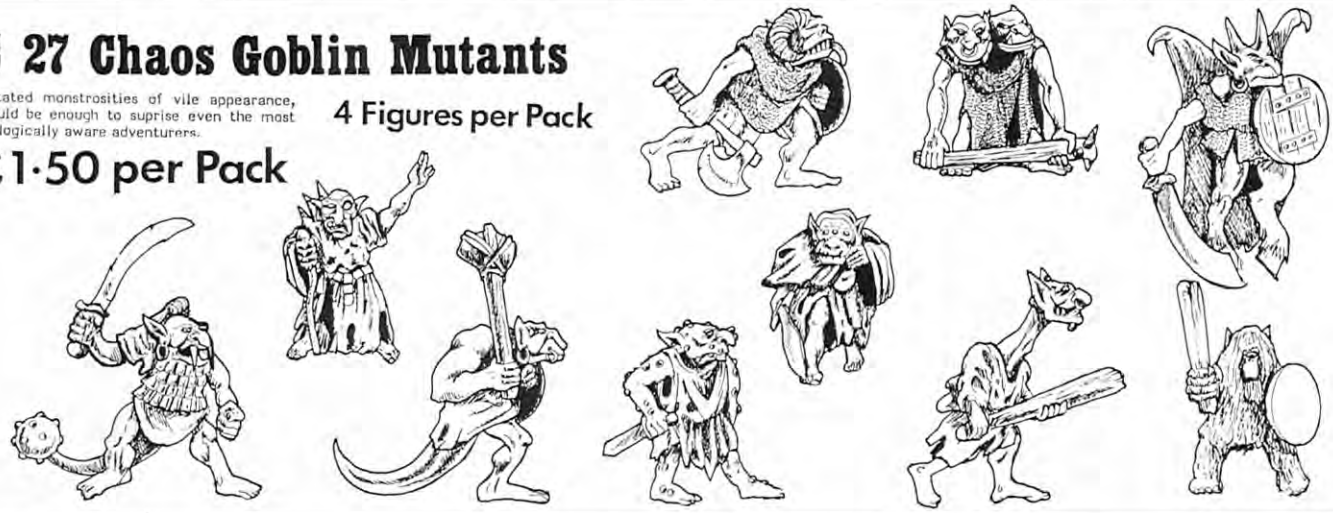

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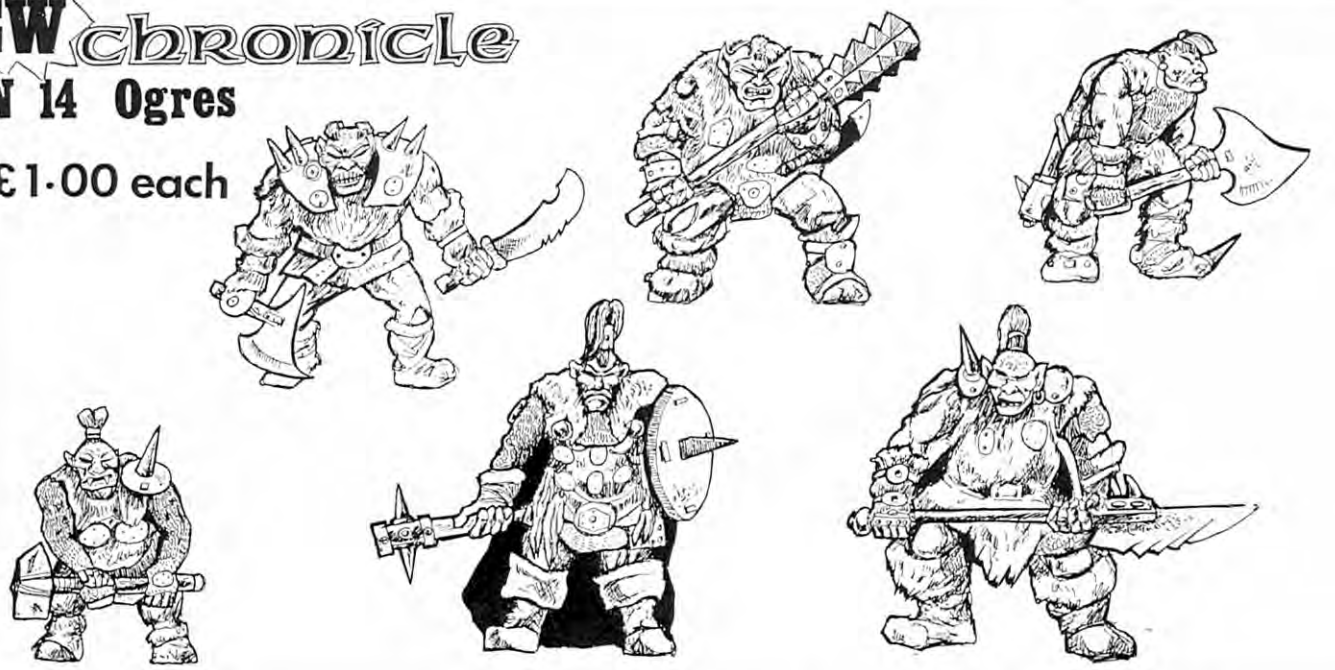

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CITADEL MINIATURES

CHEWTON ST. HILLTOP. EASTWOOD. NOTTM. UK.

Dear *WD*,

We are sorry to hear that Mr Mayson is so dismayed by *Tabletop Heroes*, and somewhat surprised that such a self-proclaimed 'quality-aware rolegamer' should slate us for featuring *Citadel Miniatures*. They currently produce 85% of all fantasy miniatures purchased in the UK, they employ eleven full-time designers and release on average twenty new figures *every week*. Is it any wonder that *Citadel* should appear so frequently in a miniatures review column?

The aim of our painting and modelling advice is to help and encourage the majority of readers who are relative beginners to gaming with miniatures. To this end, we present figures painted to an attainable standard, and refrain from the ego-trip of showcasing our display and competition work. During the eighteen years that we have enjoyed painting miniatures, we have discovered the paradox that there is nothing more discouraging to a beginner than superlative modelling. For the technical record, the majority of our photographs are shot using a small lens aperture and a slow shutter speed, giving maximum depth of field. A correction filter is used to compensate for subsequent colour casting.

We look forward to receiving some examples of Mr Mayson's (no doubt) excellent painting and photographic skill, which we will be delighted to feature. We hope they will help the majority of readers (who do not enjoy the convenience of a local games shop) to become as 'quality-aware and selective' as his goodself.

Joe Dever and Gary Chalk.

Dear *WD*,

I must agree heartily with Mr Bradshaw [*WD54*]. Each month I buy your magazine and find myself reading and enjoying *Open Box, Critical Mass, Letters, Newsboard* and the cartoon strips. But the curses start when I come across *Treasure Chest* and *Fiend Factory*.

It worries me to see the way in which *White Dwarf* is moving. Why the almost manic obsession of producing new spells and monsters by you and your readers? I can only see one reason for this; some referees think that they have to use new 'zap' spells and extremely weird and often unbelievable monsters to force interest into their game. I have found (playing *DragonQuest*) that my players prefer to use monsters such as orcs, trolls and so on in novel ways to create a 'realistic' fantasy world. Will there be an end to this assembly line of fiend making? Think of the number of monsters created for *AD&D* in all the manuals, scenarios and magazines; isn't it getting a little out of hand?

Would it not be worthwhile to have a column where referees can send in scenario and campaign ideas, plots and twists, and just general hints and tips which they have found successful? These ideas should be without stats or reference to a specific game system so that they can easily be integrated into any game at any level.

I am not suggesting that you should ban specific columns, but perhaps a slight reduction in the number of regulars like *Fiend Factory*. I know *Fiend Factory* came third in the 'most enjoyable aspect of WD' category, but then 'too much *AD&D/D&D*' came second in the 'really loathe' category. And to those who think 'bitchy Letters Page debates' are loathsome, I can say only this is one of the few ways views can be aired, be they right or wrong.

Yours in hope,
Alan Steele, Lancashire.

Dear *WD*,

Congratulations! The last few issues have definitely been interesting and useful. Issue 55 even had the great rarity of a decent cover, not a chainmail bikini in sight!

The last few *Treasure Chests* have been worth reading and although my experience of *RuneQuest* is very limited, *The Unquiet Grave* was excellent and highly inspirational. This is the sort of thing that you should be producing, articles that stimulate the poor GM's jaded imagination. The standard routine of new spells, monsters and magic can be pretty bland at times, they need to be original, believable and useful.

Don't let any of this dishearten you, nobody's perfect (not even Lew Pulsipher) and at best, ¾ of each issue is worth reading. Keep up the occasional dose of fiction, especially if it's about good old Griselda, and in the same vein, Dave Langford is earning his pay. I think you now have the space to carry a few articles for the slightly less popular games – they don't need to be only useful to players of these games, as I said, I found *The Unquiet Grave* useful. Keep up the good work!

Yours,
Shaun Clarkson, Goole.

I'd watch out, Shaun, I'm not so certain Griselda will take kindly to being called 'old' –Ed.

Dear *WD*,

Now see here you zeebs. As I see it two major blights have afflicted the Dwarf in the space of just one year: First the Reader Struck Back, and then you decided to make this greatest of all magazines (wot a creep) available to anyone with 85p and a local newsagent.

The most serious problem created by these events has been that you have started talking down to us. Oh yes you have, there's no use denying it. I judge that this sad state of affairs has come about because you imagine (sorry about using that word) that you are writing for an average age of 15 and a bunch of mindless zombies who think Gygax™ is a new type of washing powder!

This has resulted in many articles (particularly *The Name of the Game*) being of little interest to your long-time devoted readership.

Of the twenty-odd people I know who read your monthly efforts the youngest is 16, the average is 19 and of the three who actually fork out the money (instead of borrowing my copy for an indefinite period and spilling Heineken all over it) not one buys it from a newsagent.

Another worrying trend of late has been the proliferation of *RQ* articles and scenarios in recent issues. I know certain aberrant minds enjoy this strange game but does it have to take up quite so much space? More general discussions of fantasy and role-playing provide more enjoyment as they are not just read by those readers who regularly play the system in question. I hope you will decide to act on this even if it means going to the extreme of allowing Lew Pulsipher back on a regular basis.

Yours in time of adversity,
Altea the Enviable, Haslemere.

Dear *WD*,

I and everyone that I know who reads your magazine in the local wargaming club were most distressed to read about Robert Waites disdainful attitude towards the marvellous cartoons in your magazine. We have been reading *White Dwarf* since issue thirty and we all agree that *White Dwarf* has improved since the addition of the cartoons.

We also want to show our appreciation of the rest of your magazine and in particular for 'The Castle of Lost Souls' adventure and *Tabletop Heroes*, both of which were, or are interesting and enjoyable and I hope that *Tabletop Heroes* will continue and perhaps Dave Morris and Yve Newnham could follow up their threat in issue 54 and do a follow-up adventure.

Since every wargamer that I have ever met agrees that RPGs should be fun and, at moments lighthearted, such killjoys as Robert Waite and B P Stevens should perhaps find another pastime to occupy themselves with. I suggest collecting caterpillars on the M4, or perhaps train-axle number spotting.

By the way, the *Travellers* does not appeal to Elder Readers, but me and my friends (all in our early teens) look forward to it every month, as, I suspect, do any other genuine *Traveller* players.

Yours bloodthirstily,
Orlok the Assassin (and the gang).

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Bitter war rages throughout your land as the evil Darklords lay siege to the capital. The King sends you on a desperate quest to retrieve the only power in Magnamund that can save your people – 'Sommerswerd' – the sword of the sun.

THE AUTHORS
To regular readers of White Dwarf, the author/illustrator team of Joe Dever and Gary Chalk needs little introduction. Both are contributing editors to the magazine with their popular 'Tabletop Heroes' miniatures review feature. In 1982, Joe Dever won the Advanced Dungeons and Dragons ® Championships in Baltimore, USA, and he has appeared on TV, radio and in the national press in connection with fantasy role-playing games. Gary Chalk is the inventor of the acclaimed wargame, 'Cry Havoc', and illustrator of the current bestselling fantasy game, 'Talisman'.

- The books are set in Magnamund, an entire world of fantasy adventure, created and developed by the authors to form the rich background of the Lone Wolf series.
- Each book features the superb line drawings of Gary Chalk and comes complete with full-colour game map and action chart.
- These two titles are the first of four Lone Wolf books to be published during 1984; further titles will follow in 1985.

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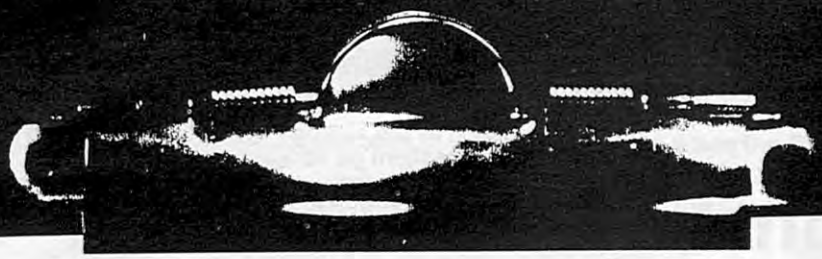


READERS OF THE LOST ARK

Once again we turn to you, dear reader, for information. Tell us your demands and we shall endeavour to satisfy them as best as we can. This is your chance to influence the shape of White Dwarf *to come! Those who include their names and addresses will be eligible for the prize draw. The winner will receive a year's subscription to* White Dwarf *and a boxed set of* Citadel White Dwarf *personality figures. Send your completed questionnaire to* Readers of the Lost Ark, *27-29 Sunbeam Rd, London NW10 6JP by 1 October 1984.*

1. What do you think of the following departments:
   A: Amazing; B: Worthwhile; C: Average; D: Dull; E: Terrible
   (a) Open Box ..... (j) Letters .....
   (b) RuneRites ..... (k) Starbase .....
   (c) Fiend Factory ..... (l) Crash Course .....
   (d) Microview ..... (m) Lew's Views .....
   (e) Critical Mass ..... (n) Tabletop Heroes .....
   (f) Treasure Chest ..... (o) Gobbledigook .....
   (g) Newsboard ..... (p) Thrud .....
   (h) Counterpoint ..... (q) Travellers .....
   (i) Small Ads .....
2. Which has been the best issue to date? .....
3. Which issue had the best cover? .....
4. Who is your favourite cover artist? .....
5. Which are your three favourite interior black and white illustrations?
   (a) WD .....p ..... ;(b) WD ..... p ..... ;(c) WD ..... p .....
6. Which has been the best scenario to date? .....
7. Which has been the best feature you have read to date .....
8. Would you like to see more departments/regular features? Yes/No
   (a) If yes, on what subjects/games? .....
   (b) If no, would you like to see anything dropped and, if so, what?
   .....
9. Would you like to see more multi-system scenarios? Yes/No
10. Do you prefer general role-playing or system-specific articles?
    General ☐ System-specific ☐
11. Would you like to see the same, more or less new magic items, spells, NPCs etc? .....
    If more, for what system? .....
12. Would you like to see the same, more or less new monsters?
    If more, for what system(s)? .....
13. Would you like more Character Classes in *White Dwarf*? Yes/No
14. Would you like to see more solo adventures like the *Castle of Lost Souls* (*WD52-WD55*)? Yes/No
15. How many people (beside yourself) read your copy of *WD*?
    None ☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three ☐ Four ☐ Five or more ☐
16. Do you read any current amateur games magazines (fanzines)? Yes/No
17. Enter the appropriate letter codes by the following magazines based on your preferences. (Do not rate a magazine you haven't seen!)
    A: Buy; B: Read friend's copies; C: Prefer content to *WD*;
    D: Worse content to *WD*; E: Same standard of content as *WD*;
    F: Has better looks/layout than *WD*; G: worse looks/layout than *WD*;
    H: about the same looks/layout as *WD*.
    (a) Imagine ..... (e) Space Gamer .....
    (b) Dragon ..... (f) Fantasy Gamer .....
    (c) Tortured Souls ..... (g) JTAS .....
    (d) Different Worlds ..... (h) Warlock .....
18. Do you own a home computer? Yes/No
    If yes, which one? .....
19. Do you play games on your home computer? Yes/No
    If yes, what type of games do you play?
    (a) Arcade ☐
    (b) Graphic Adventure ☐
    (c) Text Adventure ☐
    (d) War Games ☐
20. What is the best computer game you have ever played?
    .....
21. Do you use miniatures when playing RPGs? Yes/No
22. Do you find the advertisements in *WD* useful? Yes/No
23. Have you ever purchased a product or game because of an advertisement in *White Dwarf*? Yes/No
24. On what subject would you like to see a feature (article or scenario)? .....
    .....
25. What is the most enjoyable aspect/feature/topic of *White Dwarf*?
    .....
    .....
26. Is there anything you really detest about *White Dwarf*? .....
    .....
27. Would you like to see more fiction in *White Dwarf*? Yes/No
    If yes, would you like the occasional piece of humorous fiction? Yes/No
28. Would you like to see the same, more (or some if hasn't been covered before!) or less coverage of the following RPGs?
    A: More; B: Less; C: Same
    (a) AD&D ..... (j) Other SF RPGs .....
    (b) D&D ..... (name game) .....
    (c) RuneQuest ....
    (d) Traveller ..... (k) Other Fantasy .....
    (e) T&T ..... (name game) .....
    (f) Bushido ....
    (g) Call of Cthulhu ..... (l) Other RPGs .....
    (h) Superhero RPGs ..... (name game) .....
    (i) Spy-based RPGs ....
29. Do you think *White Dwarf* improves or lessens in quality? .....
    .....
30. Which issue of *White Dwarf* did you buy first? .....
31. How long have you been playing role-playing games? .....
32. How old are you? .....
33. If you wish to enter the prize draw, please enter your name and address below:
    Name: .....
    Address: .....
    .....
    .....

Treasure Chest *is a regular department for readers'* D&D/AD&D *ideas. This issue a collection of fantasy tips and suggestions as well as a crossword competition.*

Words of Wisdom

ARS ARCANA
Hints and tips for spell casting players by Kiel Stephens

One of the best ways to survive, and at the same time be a competent Sorcerer, is to be one step ahead of the rest of the players by learning how best to use the spells that less thoughtful players might not even look twice at. There are many spells that on the surface seem next to useless, but have a variety of hidden uses that often even the inventor of the spell didn't notice. The art of spotting a hidden use in a spell, and using it to your own advantage, and yet at the same time using the magic in a legitimate way (so that the dungeon master can't jump all over you) is a very complex one, only really learnt by watching your own (and others) efforts fail miserably, and by picking up quickly on successes. Trying out new ideas can leave you flat on your face, but inventiveness more often reaps great benefits. Each month, over the next few issues, I shall present several ideas for using some existing spells in unusual ways. Below are several low-level magic-user spells.

Levitate
Interesting to cast on other people who have no means of *flight* or *levitation* themselves, such as the average fighter or thief. Just make them go up a little, drop them, take them up again, drop them again, hours of entertainment for all the family. Seriously though, on the right opponent, it's as good as a death spell.

Continual Light
Universally used in our parties of 3rd level or above, cast upon daggers, rings, etc, and carried around dungeons instead of torches. This spell can also be used as a source of revenue by casting the spell in well to do peoples homes, instead of them using oil lamps.

Spider Climb
If you cast this one on another spell caster, then all of his/her lightweight material spell components will stick to her hands, making spell casting all but impossible, and all with no saving throw (if your DM allows it)!

Unseen Servant
An essential spell if you wish to open an unlocked door or chest that you suspect may be boobytrapped somehow. It also picks up items that you don't fancy picking up yourself, like suspected dud magic items, and it has a long duration.

Darkness 15' Radius
A perfect spell for getting rid of opponents projected images, thwarting pursuit. If you have a Monk in the party, your dungeon master might let him fight well in the dark.

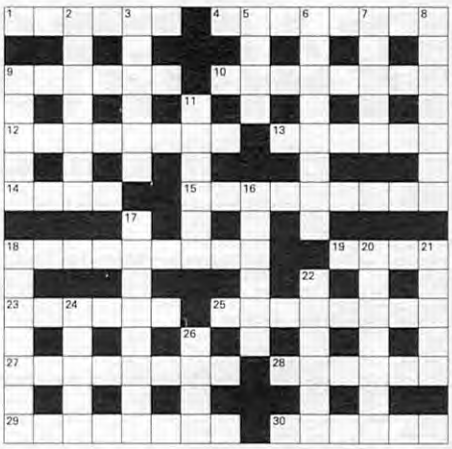
Magic Mouth
This spell has many good uses.

1. Cast it on an object with a really obscure event to set it off (such as being sat on by a green elephant) and the item will *detect magic*, with none of the saving throw problems of *nystals magic aura*.
2. If cast on a pole of some sort it can be stuck in the ground whilst you sleep, with the order to shout if anyone approaches within about 30' of you whilst you are asleep.
3. You can cast it on the back of your jacket with the order to scream if anyone raises a sword directly behind your back, effectly negating people's backstab attempts on you.
4. Cast on arrows or bolts to scream on impact, they can be used to distract a guard or anyone else you may wish to divert for some reason.
5. Put it on all of your expensive items, set to scream if picked up by anyone but yourself; a great assistance against pickpockets.
6. Set on the wall of your room when you are out with the order to speak to you as you enter the room if someone has been, or still is in the room. Helps to thwart thieves or assassins, without tipping them off first.

Shatter
Useful for casting upon the potion bottle of an opponent if you suspect he or she is about to turn *invisible*, go *gaseous*, etc. The potion may be magical, but the bottle isn't.□

Next month: Onto some 3rd level spells.

WD CROSSWORD COMPETITION
Below is a fantasy (well, mostly!) crossword by Martin Bickerdale. Send in your answers by 21 September, and we'll draw the winner out of a hat. The prize will be a £10 *Games Workshop Gift voucher*, exchangeable at any *GW* shop for games etc. Good luck!



Across
1. Is TSR a mix-up between levels?(6)
4. Sounds like training for the possessed.(8)
9. Find in a mixture of coal and French.(6)
10. Young girls become relatives of halflings.(8)
12. One German, with actor, makes The Beginning.(8)
13. Abode of mixed up legendary bird.(3,3)
14. River of Hades.(4)
15. Horrible smelly carnivore.(9)
18. Legendary sword.(9)
19. Black elves.(4)
23. This race sounds alcoholic, I follow.(6)
25. Hellraiser.(8)
27. Wet weather version of a stag.(8)
28. An experienced monk is found in a stream.(6)
29. Half dogs become mega beings.(8)
30. These bodies come from altars.(6)

Down
2. 9D & 25 might have knowledge of this.(7)
3. Flightless bird.(6)
5. This beast is 10 – 0 against the navy.(4)
6. Referring to confused Edward is recompensed.(8)
7. Dial one for a Greek classic.(5)
8. Perfume from Essen, certainly.(7)
9. Fearful ex-magic users.(5)
11. Male swan begins creepy crawlies home.(6)
16. Found in dark places and generally above.(6)
17. A flutter of an eyelid and he's gone.(5,3)
18. Put up with terrible red dune.(7)
20. Bury once again.(7)
21. It can be holy or unholy.(5)
22. Drifters backward son is about mad.(6)
24. Vernacular.(5)
26. Self advertisement produces a drink.(4)

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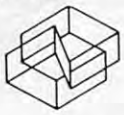

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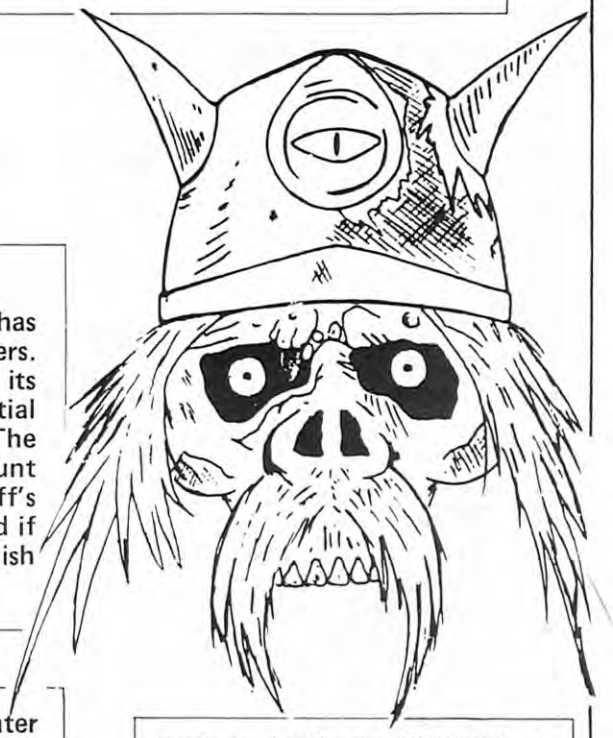
EARTHWOOD is completely computer moderated but the turn sheet and replies are written in plain English so that you can easily understand them. No need to look through complex charts and code books to understand this game.

CRASIMOFF'S WORLD



'A Play-By-Mail game with a D&D flavour'

'Undoubtedly, CRASIMOFF'S WORLD is a highly worthy game. It has been running for several years now and has a large number of players. Compared to others of its kind it is not expensive and it goes out of its way to encourage communication between players. I found the initial scenario interesting, and the world lived up to this initial promise. The fact that they are hand written merely testifies to the immense amount of effort put in by the GM. So, with its regular newsletter, Crasimoff's World is a friendly, efficient, and relatively cheap game to play, and if you wish to try a commercial PBM game with a distinctly D&D game-ish flavour, I would unhesitatingly recommend it.'

As reviewed in **IMAGINE** 18

Crasimoff's World is human moderated so as to allow players greater flexibility in response. There are hundreds of tokens detailing everything you can see, encounter, and acquire from detailed descriptions of towns to the workings of a spell.

Earthwood or Crasimoff's World can be joined for £5.00 For this you receive the rulebook and registration form, set uo sheets and first three turns. Future turns are £1.50 each. European readers: Only CW, rates same as UK.

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MEMORANDUM

FROM: Jerv and Jon
TO: WD Readers

Dragonmeet was really good, pity about the numerous fatalities (in the games we ran!).

As if Jerv hasn't enough to do he's now head of games playtesting at Games Workshop. If you've got a boardgame or RPG, drop a line to Mark, GW's games editor at the usual address. Who knows, you could be the new Gary Gygax (who?)!

See you at Games Day!

Jerv Jon

ONE LINERS

Ringworld (£24.95) four books and other components (dice, character sheets and cardboard figures). Based on *RuneQuest III*, very high quality sf RPG system.

Elfquest (£19.95) fantasy RPG system (two books, dice and playsheets). Based on the famous comic strip series. Game system is modified *RQ*.

Curse of the Cthonians £7.95) four complete scenarios for *CoC*, very aptly described as the most detailed and devious scenaros ever published for *Call of Cthulhu*.

Glozel est Authentique (£7.95) *TOME* adventure pack for *CoC* based around a mysterious French village. Also has a bonus scenario where characters investigate the secrets of Stalin and the Kremlin.

Dagorlad and the Dead Marshes (£4.95) *Hillmen of the Trollshaws* (£4.95), *Shelob's Lair* (or *Cirith Ungol* £4.95) – three source packs for *MERP*, not really scenarios as such, but valuable background material for campaigns.

Chill (Pacesetter £11.95) – basic horror RPG produced by ex-*TSR* employees. Very similar in format to *Basic D&D* rulebooks, it has a combat system similar to *Marvel Superheroes*. *Highland Terror* (£4.95) and *Village of Twilight* (£4.95) are its first scenarios. *Timemaster (Pacesetter* £11.95) – similar in content and style to *Chill*. Players can zap back and forth through time. Strange choice for an RPG considering *Timeship (Yaquinto)* proved to be such a turkey. *Crossed Swords* (£4.95) is also available as a scenario pack.

EARTHWOOD

Earthwood, the major US PBM is coming to the UK. *KJC Games* have been granted the official licence by *Game Systems Inc* of Miami. The start-up date for *Earthwood* UK is September 1st, to coincide with *Games Day*. *KJC* will have a stand there to demonstrate the game and encourage you to sign up!! No prices yet but *Earthwood* is supposedly 'as close to *D&D* as possible within the constraints of a PBM'.

GW SOFTWARE

Angus Ryall, software marketing manager for *Games Workshop* is on the hunt for new software, primarily for the *Spectrum* or the *Commodore 64*.

If you have designed a programme or have plans to, contact Angus at 27/29 Sunbeam Road, NW10.

He has three in the pipeline at the moment, due for release in October. *Journey's End*, a strongly *D&D* orientated three-part graphic adventure game – which has been written by four *White Dwarf* readers! *Battlecars*, a computerised version of the ever-popular *Battlecars*, full of death-defying action for two players.

The third game in production has a working title of *D-Day* – which has four scrolling maps covering all the beach-heads. All three are for the *Spectrum* and will be previewed at *Games Day*.

CRANE & STARMASTER

Tribes of Crane and *Starmaster*, both *Schubel* PBMs and handled in the UK by *Mitre Games* will be re-launched at *Games Day*. The two games have been produced as boxed sets containing set-up information and vouchers for the first three turns and will retail at £9.95 each. *Mitre* will have a stand at *Games Day* and will be demonstrating their systems.

FELLOWSHIP FELLOWS

Iron Crown will soon be releasing two more *Middle Earth* board games to follow in the footsteps of their immensely popular *Fellowship of the Ring*. *The Lonely Mountain* simulates the return of Thorin Oakenshield to the halls of his forefathers, his battles against the goblins, squatters and his confrontation with the dragon, Smaug. Bilbo Baggins is a member of his party and on this trip he finds a ring. . . . . .

The second boxed set is *The Battle of the Five Armies*; the conflict in the north of Middle Earth (at the end of *The Hobbit*). We haven't seen these yet and are no prices either, but ...d be out for Christmas.

ERROR OF THE MONTH AWARD

White Dwarf is our nominee for this new prestigious award. We have 'unfortunately mislaid' the address of P J Emery, author of *The Sunfire's Heart*; Peter, would you please contact Jamie Thomson as soon as possible.

POOLING RESOURCES

Games of Liverpool have just taken delivery of three new products from *FGU*. For all you poor 'forgotten' *Chivalry & Sorcery* players, finally there's a new item just for you! *The Dragonlord*, which is apparently a *C&S* adventure pack and will retail for £3.65. *From the Deeps of Space* is a new adventure for *Villains & Vigilantes* (£3.65). *FGU* recently said that *V&V* is their best-selling game in the US; *Bushido* is the most popular in the UK, despite the fact that there's only been one scenario released, and it doesn't look like there's another in the pipeline.

FGU have also just released a new RPG called *Psi-World* – all we know is that the players are powerful psychics battling for good or ill; Doug Cowie of *Games of Liverpool* believes that it will be under £10.

NEXT ISSUE

Strikeback – a time-travelling superhero scenario for *Golden Heroes*, and *Champions; Beyond the Final Frontier*, role-playing after death; *For a Few Credits More* . . , everything about money in *Traveller*, something on traps in *D&D* and the final part of our ninja series, plus all the regular departments.

US SPY REPORT

Steve Jackson Games are about to release a new RPG called *Toon* – in which the players role-play cartoon characters. *Sleuth*, designers of *Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective*, also have a new RPG under way – based on the Icelandic viking mythology and quests – *The Sagas*. For *Starfleet Battles* fans, *Task Force* have *Supplement II* (X-ships) and *Captain's Log Part 4;* they have also increased the *Starfire* range with *New Empires* and *The Gormkhanate War Shuttle Command* (no details is also a new release.

Victory Games have added to their *James Bond* products with *You Only Live Twice* (which may be a solo) and *Live and Let Die*.

West End Games announced the release of their first RPG called *Paranoia*, which is set in the far future where the players are operatives in the service of 'the computer', the prime directives being liquidating traitors and denouncing their fellow players (each player has six clones of his character). Looks like it's based on the 'gun toting mentality. They have also compiled two 'Best ofs', *Alarums and Excursions* and *New York Conspiracy* – both popular US fanzines.

Hopefully all this and more will be available in the UK by Xmas. We'll keep you posted.

WORKSHOP UPDATE

**Dungeon Planner II – Nightmare in Blackmarsh* and *Dungeon Foor Plans* IV should be in the shops pretty soon (£4.95 and £2.99 respectively).

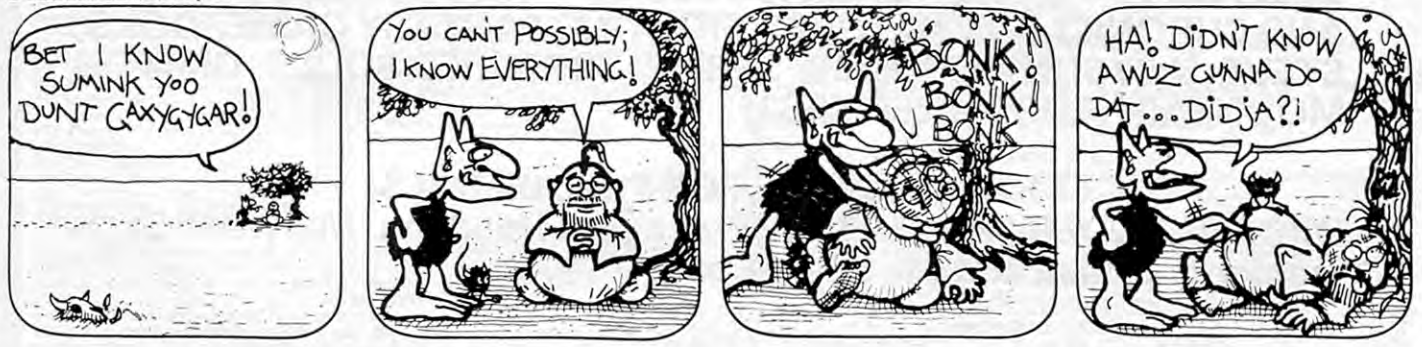
**Golden Heroes* update – the system is near completion and will be available very soon. *Mega-Villains* is to be the first supplement and is already under way.

**Judge Dredd RPG* is being playtested at *Games Day* and will be out for Xmas. Robert Neville is compiling information for the first scenario pack which will be an excursion into the Cursed Earth.

**Dr Who RPG* – which had its first 'out of house' playtest at *Dragonmeet*, will be blooded again at *Games Day*. *GW* hope to release it some time in the Spring.

**Games Workshop's Call of Cthulhu* scenario pack has a working title of *Green and Pleasant Land*. Playtesting of the seven scenarios (five linked, and two bonus ones) is well under way; the designers, Steve and Jon, famous for *The Last Log* in *WD56* will also be running some games at *Games Day*, so pop along and join in the fun.

GOBBLEDIGOOK by Bil



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FRP Northampton
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Urgent
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Help!
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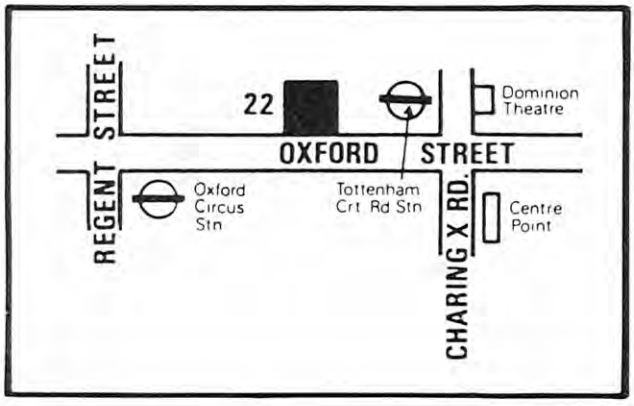

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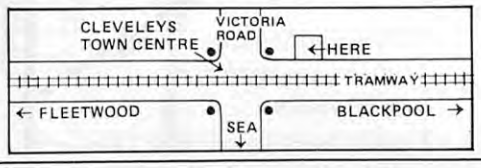

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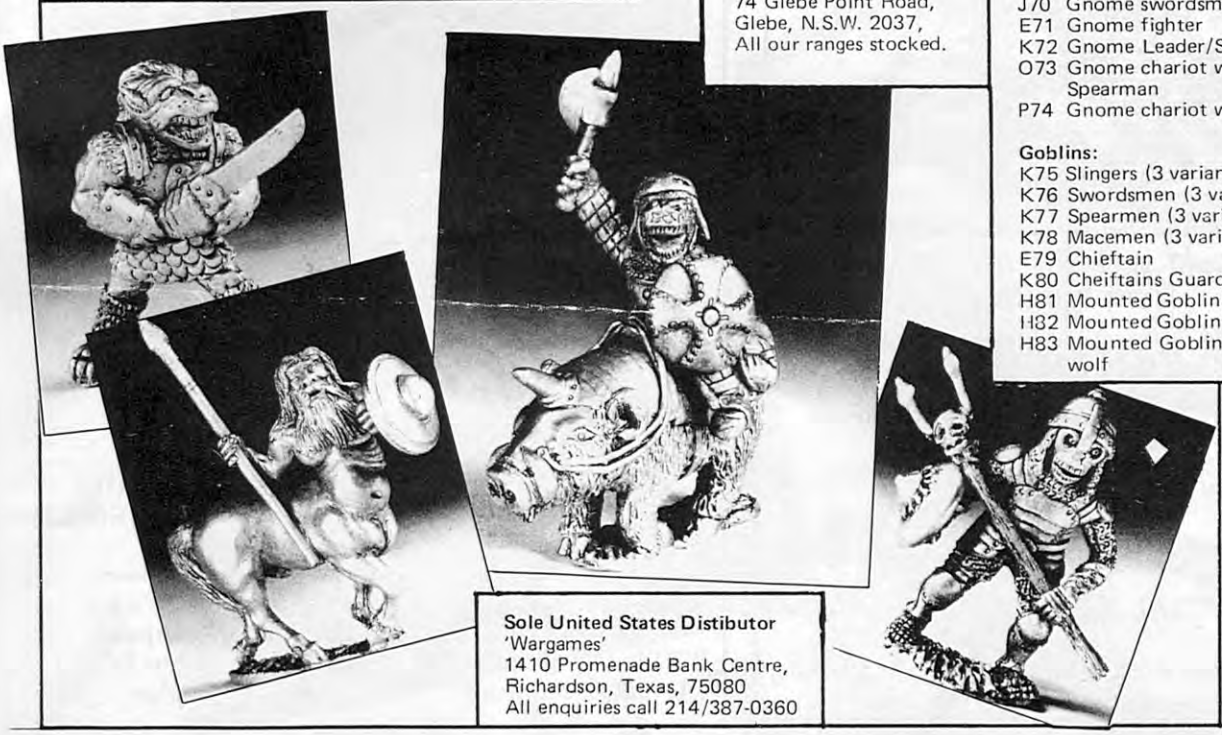

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